

# Talking to Your Child about COVID-19

## Middle School

The World Health Organization officially declared coronavirus a pandemic. Health experts predict that the virus and its impact on our communities are just beginning.



You play an important role in helping children and teens better understand what's happening and help them manage their own related worries or anxiety.

### Here are some tips that can help:

Children this age will be very aware of what is going on. They have probably seen news coverage and discussed the virus at school or with friends.

- ✓ Talk to your middle school children and answer any questions. This will help you determine how much they know and may help you correct any misinformation they might have.
- ✓ Acknowledge any feelings of anxiety, worry, or panic.
- ✓ Children this age will be more interested in what might happen in the future. Stick to the facts and don't burden them with your own anxiety about uncertain dystopian scenarios.
- ✓ Some children may act out scary feelings through misbehavior. Others may become more withdrawn. Pay attention to these cues and ask them to tell you about their feelings.
- ✓ Talk to your kids about what they see on TV or read online and help them understand which sources are reliable and which aren't when it comes to information about the virus.
- ✓ Talk about how events like this can surface harmful stereotypes and discrimination against certain people and populations. In this case, talk about the importance of disrupting anti-Asian sentiment and xenophobia in coverage of and response to the coronavirus.
- ✓ Seek out positive media. Watch, read, and share stories about ways people are responding to the virus in collaborative ways to keep communities safe.
- ✓ Help guide your child's worry into things they can do – like learning more about how to prevent the spread of the virus including washing hands and getting enough sleep. Use these resources to spark conversations
  - "Understanding Corona Virus and How Germs Spread": Brains On Podcast (plus a kid-centered series on news literacy called "Prove It.")
  - "Just for kids: A comic exploring the new coronavirus": Minnesota Public Radio