

# I Am A Health Care Worker During COVID-19 Pandemic: Answering My Child's Questions About Going to Work

This is a difficult time for everyone, but particularly challenging for healthcare workers and their families. Children and adolescents may have questions or worries about you going to work. Please use this as a resource in answering your child's questions and helping them to cope during this challenging time.

As always, thank you for your commitment and dedication to our patients and your fellow health care workers.

## Find Out What They Know

Find a quiet, neutral place to have a conversation about what they know about COVID-19.



*This gives you a chance to clear up any misconceptions or confusion about the virus and outbreak.*

## Acknowledge Your Own Feelings

Talking with your child about this topic can invoke your own fears and anxieties. Take some time to breathe before talking to your child.

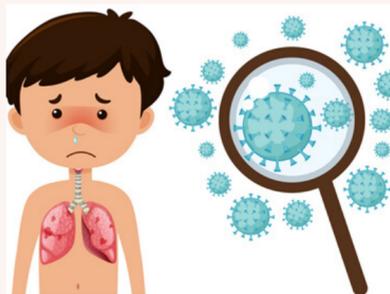
Remember this conversation is about giving facts and setting the tone for your child's coping.

Children will pick up on their caregivers emotions. It is okay to acknowledge that it is a scary time but remind them that your job is to keep your child safe.



## Give the Facts

It's important to give children concrete and factual information. But remember to do it in a developmentally appropriate way. See reverse side for tips to explain COVID-19 to children and teens.



## Validate their Feelings

Acknowledge your child's emotions and validate that it is okay to have feelings such as fear, anger or sadness. Remind them what you are doing to stay safe while you are at work and at home.



## Teach Them How You Stay Safe at Work and How you Keep Them Safe When You Come Home

Explain and practice safe handwashing at home. Take a photo of yourself at work to show them your PPE and explain how each piece of PPE keeps you safe.

Explain your process for making sure no germs come in the house when you come home and why they might have to wait to come close to you until you are clean.



## The "New Normal" & Communication

Explain to your child that things are changing every day and you will do your best to explain things to them. But encourage your children to ask questions or talk about their feelings. Remember, they may need to hear things repeatedly, try not to get frustrated with them asking.



Remind them that this pandemic will not last forever, so that we have to practice this "new normal" routine for a while. But you will need to work together as a family to support each other for now.

## Try to Add a Ritual to Your Day

Your child needs to feel secure and safe. Try to establish a ritual that your child can depend on. It could be as easy as a note you leave before you go to work or a text, call or FaceTime during your break, a picture of you in your PPE before you start your work day. Or maybe your child wants to give you a note that you carry with you.



# I Am A Health Care Worker During COVID-19 Pandemic: Answering My Child's Questions About Going to Work

## Examples of Developmentally Appropriate Answers for School-Aged Children

**What is a virus?  
Why is it called coronavirus or COVID-19?**

"A virus is a kind of tiny germ that gets inside your body and makes you feel sick. It is kind of like when you get a cold or the flu.

Coronavirus is the name for a group of viruses that make people feel sick and COVID-19 is one kind of coronavirus. It's kind of like Nintendo is a type of video game system but there are so many kinds of Nintendo: Switch, Wii, WiiU, DS.

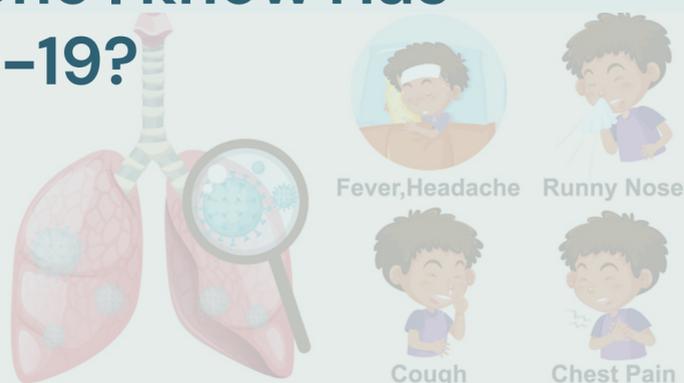
**How Does Somebody Get COVID-19?**



"COVID-19 is contagious, which means it is very easy for people to get it from each other.

One way to get it is by touching someone who has the virus and then touching your nose, mouth or eyes. Or someone can give it to you by sneezing or coughing too near to you. Always sneeze or cough into your elbow and wash your hands for 20 seconds after you sneeze or cough!"

**How Do I Know if I or Someone I know Has COVID-19?**



"This virus is very sneaky. You will not always be able to see that someone has the virus. It might be inside of your body, but it waits a few days before your body starts to feel sick.

You might get a fever, which means you might feel very hot or very cold. A fever is your body's way of telling us that you are sick and need to rest.

Some people get a cough or sore throat but not everyone does. It is important to tell a grown up if you don't feel well. Most people who get COVID-19 feel sick for a few days and then get better. Only a small number of people have had more serious problems and most of them are not kids."

**Will I Get it?  
How Do I Stay Safe?**



"Everyone in the entire country is trying to keep each other safe right now. That is why your school and many businesses are closed.

Practicing "Safe Social Distancing" helps us so that we are not giving each other the virus by touch. So stay six feet away from people when you are outside or near people that are not living in your house.

Good hand washing! You can use hand sanitizer but even better, use soap and water to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds – try singing Happy Birthday two times and when you are done, your hands will be clean!