

# COVID-19

## CORONAVIRUS

# EXPLAINED TO PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Based on the **World Health Organisation's** guidelines



Little hands matter



# FIRST THINGS FIRST



I am  
**COVID-19**. I am a  
**new** Coronavirus. Here  
are some facts about  
me.

## WHAT IS THE CORONAVIRUS OR COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illnesses that are known to cause infections that impact on your lungs and your breathing. These include the common cold, flu and serious forms of pneumonia.

The most recently discovered coronavirus causes **coronavirus disease COVID-19** and it was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

## SYMPTOMS (*signs of infection*)

The symptoms (*the signs that show that a person may be infected with the virus*) are very similar to that of a common cold or flu. It may include signs such as a fever, feeling tired, coughing, aches and pains, nasal congestion (*also called a stuffy nose*), runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea (*a runny tummy*). If you, your child or any family member shows any of these signs, please seek medical attention.

### DO NOT PANIC

Your health care practitioner will do the necessary examinations, tests and provide you with all the information that you need.

### IMPORTANT

Do not self-medicate! Call your clinic or doctor ahead of your visit or the **National Institute Communicable Diseases (NICD)** hotline:

**0800 029 999**

### Did you know?

Most people, about **8 in every 10**, recover from this disease without getting very ill or needing special treatment.



See page 9 how to explain **coronavirus disease COVID-19** to your child.

# PROTECT & PREVENT



Here  
are some  
**good ideas** on how  
to protect yourself  
against me – the  
**COVID-19** virus.

## It starts with your HANDS

### What is so special about our HANDS?

**MOST** infections are spread through your hands and the hands of others.

That is why keeping your hands clean is the easiest and most effective way to prevent you from picking up germs and viruses that will make you ill.

## WASH your HANDS regularly with soap and clean water

Handwashing with soap and running water is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and viruses.

Wash your hands often with soap and running water for **20 seconds**.

The easiest way to know how long **20 seconds** is, is to sing 'happy birthday' two times or to sing the first verse of our national anthem, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*.



When washing your hands with soap and running water, **you should not open the tap fully**. Be wise with the water usage when using this method.

### Did you know?

**Regularly washing** your bare hands with soap and running water offers more protection against catching the COVID-19 virus than wearing rubber gloves.

(World Health Organisation)

I and my other coronavirus family members are **very scared** of soap and water!



Look on page 10  
for the 6 steps of  
handwashing



## REMEMBER

Wash your hands with soap and water – and assist your child to wash his or her hands properly with soap and clean water.

This will not only help with the prevention of diseases, but also create **healthy habits** that will last a lifetime.

## More about your HANDS

### From the HANDS to the EYES, MOUTH AND NOSE

When our hands are not clean and we touch our (or other people's) **eyes, nose or mouth**, we spread germs and viruses.

Try to avoid touching your or your child's eyes, nose or mouth unnecessarily, and if you must, **wash your hands before** you touch these areas.

Teach this to your child from a young age. Another **healthy habit** that will last a lifetime.



I am  
**COVID-19** and  
I love dirty hands.  
Dirty hands take me  
to other parts of your  
body.



#### Did you know?

Our hands **touch many surfaces and objects every day**. This is how germs and viruses get from these surfaces and objects to our hands – and then when we touch our eyes, nose or mouth, these germs and viruses enter our bodies.

## Don't touch the T-zone

Never put your  
**fingers** in or on your...



**eyes,**  
**nose** or  
**mouth**

# Even more about your HANDS

## From HAND TO HAND

When we greet each other, we often do that by shaking hands or hugging. It is time to **learn a new way of greeting** that will help us to protect ourselves from germs and viruses.

It is called the '**elbow greet**'.



COVID-19 just loves to meet other people. I then can go and visit their bodies too.

### DO IT LIKE THIS:



1. Bend your arm and **extend your elbow** to the person that you want to greet.
2. He or she should **do the same**.
3. Then you greet **by touching elbows. It's cool**.
4. And we should **teach our children** to do the same.

Here are other cool non-contact ways to greet



wave



**namaste**  
is a slight bow and hands pressed together



foot shake



### AVOID

the following when you greet other people:

- shaking hands
- hugging
- kissing, even on the cheeks
- high 5's
- fist bumps
- thumb greets



## A quick summary about HANDS

- ✓ Most infections are spread through your **hands** and the hands of others
- ✓ Wash your **hands** regularly with soap and running water for **20 seconds**.
- ✓ When our **hands** are not clean and we touch our (or other people's) eyes, nose or mouth, we spread germs and viruses.
- ✓ Greet with the **elbow greet**. Do not shake **hands**.

## COUGHS AND SNEEZES

### CATCH your cough or sneeze

When we cough and sneeze, droplets leave our mouths and noses into the air – about one meter around us.

If you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a flexed elbow or tissue. **Remember** to throw the tissue away in a closed dustbin after using it.

**Teach your child** to do the same when he or she coughs or sneezes.



I am **COVID-19** and I can travel for a short distance from your mouth and nose when you cough.

### REMEMBER

Wash your hands with soap and clean water every time after you have coughed or sneezed. And **teach your child** to do the same. Another **healthy habit** to learn from an early age.



If you  
**COUGH** or **SNEEZE**  
cover your  
nose and mouth  
with a **tissue** please

OR



**COUGH AND SNEEZE...**



**INTO YOUR ELBOW, PLEASE!**

 Save the Children.



Now these are **smart ways** to put a travel ban on me and other viruses or germs.

Little hands matter

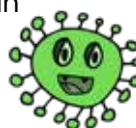


## ONE METER DISTANCE

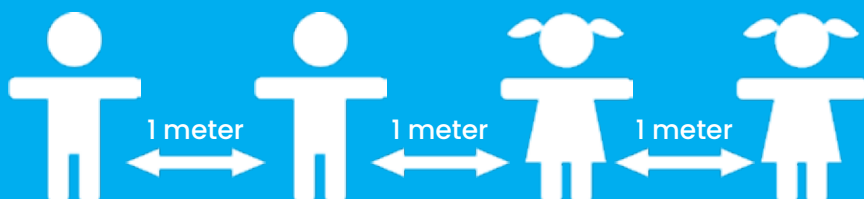
Keep at **least one (1) meter distance** between yourself and anyone coughing and sneezing. The droplets from a sneeze or cough cannot travel that far in the air!

Avoid touching people unnecessarily.

This is also called **social distancing**.



Even if I am in the droplets that leave your mouth, I cannot travel that far by air.



## AVOID CROWDED PLACES

In **crowded places** like shopping centres, places of worship and community gatherings, we are very close to other people. Lots of people touch the same surfaces that we do, cough and sneeze and are very close to us. **This creates opportunities for germs and viruses to spread very quickly.**

If you can, **avoid** these places or go at times when there are not many people.



I love **crowded places**. It makes it easy for me to visit other people.





# WHEN YOU FEEL SICK

## STAY AT HOME WHEN SICK

If you feel sick or your child feels sick – **stay at home**. In this way, you protect yourself, your child as well as other people. Remember to seek medical help immediately as well.

**Do not** go back to work if you have not fully recovered, or send your child back to the early childhood development programme or school before he or she has fully recovered.



As COVID-19, I show the signs of infection that are very similar to that of my other family members – the common cold or flu.



## IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 (the new Coronavirus)

If your health care practitioner confirms that you or your child has the COVID-19 (newest Coronavirus), **DO NOT PANIC**. They will tell you what to do and prescribe any medication that you or your child may need.



### Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Eat healthily (*this helps the body to fight the virus*)
2. Drink lots of fluid (*water*)
3. Avoid contact with other people (*in this way we prevent other people from getting the virus too*)
4. Speak to your child about his or her illness in a calm and comforting manner
5. Stay at home until fully recovered
6. Monitor the symptoms. If they get worse, contact your health care practitioner



# TALK to your YOUNG CHILD about the CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



**Be willing to talk.** Your young child is curious and attentive. They will already have heard something. Silence and secrets do not protect our children.

**Honesty and openness do.** Think about how much they will understand. You know them best.

**Your child may ask (many) questions.** And even if your child does not ask questions or is too young to ask questions, you will notice that he or she is still curious about the changes happening in their world (and your response to it).

**There are a lot of stories going around.** Some may not be true. Get the correct information about the coronavirus (COVID-19). Speak accurately about the risk of COVID-19 based facts and the latest official health advice (see pages 2 and 11).

**Be open and listen.** Allow your child to talk freely. Ask them open questions and find out how much they already know.

**Be honest.** Always answer their questions truthfully. Think about how old your child is and how much they can understand. Discuss the issues simply and in a calm manner. Remember young children often understand complicated issues better if we explain it to them in a concrete manner.

**It is OK not to know the answers.** It is fine to say: *"We don't know, but we are working on it; or "We don't know, but we think..."*. Use this as an opportunity to learn something new with your child!

**Be supportive.** Your child may be scared or confused. Give them space to share how they are feeling and let them know you are there for them.

**Heroes not bullies.** Explain that COVID-19 has nothing to do with the way someone looks, where they are from, or what language they speak. Tell your child that we can be compassionate to people who are sick and those who are caring for them. Look for stories of people who are working to stop the outbreak and are caring for sick people.

**End on a good note.** Check to see if your child is okay. Remind them that you care and that they can talk to you anytime. Then do something fun together!



## HEALTHY HABITS

wash  
hands



## MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

There are a lot of stories going around. Some may not be true. On this page you will find **websites** and **telephone numbers** where you will find the **correct** information.

### WEBSITES

#### Government's general website

[www.gov.za/Coronavirus](http://www.gov.za/Coronavirus)

More information on –  
**Lockdown**

<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/2020/03/23/south-african-lockdown-guidelines-information/>

#### Frequently Asked Questions –Covid-19

[www.gov.za/coronavirus/faq](http://www.gov.za/coronavirus/faq)

#### Schools

[www.gov.za/Coronavirus/schools](http://www.gov.za/Coronavirus/schools)

#### Hospitals

[www.gov.za/coronavirus/hospitals](http://www.gov.za/coronavirus/hospitals)

#### Social Grants

[www.gov.za/coronavirus/socialgrants](http://www.gov.za/coronavirus/socialgrants)

#### Department of Social Development

[www.dsd.gov.za/](http://www.dsd.gov.za/)

#### Department of Basic Education

<https://www.education.gov.za/>

#### Department of Health

<https://sacoronavirus.co.za/>

#### National Institute for Communicable Diseases

<http://www.nicd.ac.za/>

#### World Health Organisation (WHO)

##### Parenting in the time of COVID-19

[www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting](http://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting)

#### UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>

### CALL CENTRES & HOTLINES

Emergency number  
(COVID-19)  
**0800 029 999**

Gender-based Violence  
Command Centre:  
**0800 428 428** or  
**\*120\*7867#** (free)

Persons with disabilities  
SMS "HELP" to **31531**

Childline  
**08000 55 555** (free)

Department of Education  
**0800 202 933**

SASSA (grants)  
**0800 60 10 11**

AIDS help line  
**0800 012 322**

Women Abuse Helpline  
**0800 150 150**

South African Police  
Services  
**08600 10111**

Lifeline / National Crisis  
Line  
**0861 322 322**

Presidential hotline  
**17737**

#### WhatsApp

COVID-19 Whatsapp  
Say "Hi" to **0600 123 456**  
on stay informed.



# **COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS EXPLAINED TO PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN**

March 2020

## **UNICEF South Africa**

Equity House  
659 Pienaar Street  
Brooklyn  
Pretoria  
South Africa

Telephone: 012 425 4700

[pretoria@unicef.org](mailto:pretoria@unicef.org)

[www.unicef.org/southafrica](http://www.unicef.org/southafrica)

## **Department of Social Development**

HSRC Building  
134 Pretorius Street  
Pretoria  
South Africa

Telephone: 012 312 7727

[www.dsd.gov.za](http://www.dsd.gov.za)

## **Department of Basic Education**

222 Struben Street  
Pretoria  
South Africa

Telephone: 012 357 3000

[www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

*In partnership with the National Early Childhood Development Alliance (NECDA), the South African Congress for Early Childhood Development and the LEGO Foundation*

# Little hands matter

