

# Tips for Addressing the Corona Virus

Anything with 24/7 news coverage gets our attention. But often makes issues seem more threatening than might be warranted in the moment. At this point, such is the case with the Corona Virus (COVID-19). Let's take a moment to focus on what makes sense for *today*.

## Pursue Reliable Information Sources

Source your news carefully. Keep in mind that many social media streams and news outlets sensationalize and hypothesize. This style of reporting keeps people tuned in, but we know that this dramatizing often increases anxiety for viewers, which is clearly not helpful!

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is our best source of information. They provide continual updates on their [website](#), as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Your [state's government website](#) can inform you the latest information in your state, like the number of confirmed case, how many are under monitoring, and which areas of the state are most at risk. Many have COVID-19 resources available.

## Keep Perspective

So far this year, 14,000 Americans have died from the flu. John Hopkins outlines the [differences between the flu and COVID-19](#). While things are changing rapidly, the death rate for our seasonal flu is currently far greater than for that of the Corona virus. In fact, Johns Hopkins reports these statistics:

### Infections

- COVID-19: Approximately 89,000 cases worldwide; 91 cases in the U.S. as of March 2, 2020.
- Flu: Estimated 1 billion cases worldwide; 9.3 million to 45 million cases in the U.S. per year.

### Deaths

- COVID-19: Approximately 3,000 deaths reported worldwide; 6 deaths in the U.S. as of March 2, 2020.
- Flu: 291,000 to 646,000 deaths worldwide; 12,000 to 61,000 deaths in the U.S. per year.

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Remarkably, *children are less affected by COVID-19 than the rest of the population!* Scientists are researching why that might be, but one possibility is that the immune response in children is so very robust.

## Practice Basic Hygiene

Basic Hygiene makes a substantial difference. At times like this, one of the best things parents can do is teach the hygiene procedures that provide the best prevention for all of us:

### Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

One way of making sure you wash your hands long enough to be effective is to sing a song while you do it. "Happy Birthday" happens to be about the right length if you sing it through 2 times, but you can come up with your own!

### Cough or sneeze into your elbow.

We know that, for people who usually cough into their hand, it has likely become an automatic behavior. To change that behavior will take practice, practice, practice! So actually practice over and over again. Everyone in the family! Five times at every meal or however you can do it, everybody practice coughing into an elbow instead of a hand.

### Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Try tying a bandana or hanky over your nose and mouth just to help you become aware of how often you unconsciously touch your face.

### Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

This include counters, door knobs, and tables.

### Stay home when you're sick.

**Staying home when you're sick will help stop the spread of any flu or virus.** If it's hard to miss work, talk to your boss ahead of time about working remotely. We hate our kids to miss school, but you're helping your community when keep anyone with a fever at home.

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## Trust the Preparation

### Know that schools are preparing.

Schools are using reliable sources to prepare for these kinds of events. We've encouraged schools to let parents know what they're doing so, but not to burden you with frequent updates. If things get serious, they'll let you know ASAP! For now, practice good hygiene with your family and go on about your lives. Remain aware of the trends and read what your school sends to you.

### Talk with your children.

[Live Science](#) notes that children seem least likely to contract the virus. Scientists are working to understand this, but one possibility is that the innate immune response tends to be more active in children. That said, **keep kids home when they have any type of flu symptoms.**

Often, children don't talk about their fears. They figure if we don't bring it up, we think they should be able to handle it on their own. Another aspect of this is that if we ask directly, "Are you worried about the corona virus," many youth will deny their fears. Making them the experts is a wonderful way to open the conversation. Try something like this: *"I've been hearing on the news that a lot of kids are worried about the corona virus. Are kids at your school talking about it?"* Now children don't have to own or deny their own fears. It feels much less vulnerable to speak about others, but we can know that everything they say is framed by their own take on this.

Reassure them that there are helpers everywhere working to keep us safe and healthy. [This article](#) from NPR has a great comic just for kids that explores all things COVID-19, from what it is, what it looks like, to tips to stay healthy. Best of all, it includes a printable comic zine and a video on how to assemble it.

### In sum, take a deep breath.

It always feels disconcerting when the unknowns are high, and with this novel virus there's much unknown. The science is evolving rapidly - daily – as experts prepare to protect us by the best possible means. Remember that right now, even as you read, our government and medical professionals are working diligently behind the scenes to ready our health care facilities for the best possible response as this unfolds.