

How to talk to your Kids about the Corona Virus



If there is one thing at Pediatric Dental Associates of Randolph that we know well, it's kids. On a daily basis in our office we deal with kids approaching situations that are difficult for them, such as their first dental visit or having a cavity filled. The approach we always take is to follow the child's lead and answer honestly any questions they may have.

With the current upheaval in our daily lives due to the pandemic of the Corona Virus, our children are aware that their lives are suddenly very different. Their daily routines with school and daycare, playdates and parent's work schedules have completely been upended. They sense increased stress from the adults in their lives.

The best way to help your child process what's going on around them is to answer their questions as best as you can. Listen to your child, assess what knowledge they have gathered about the virus so you can have a sense of how concerned they might be. If your child is very young and hasn't heard about it yet and just doesn't understand why mommy and daddy are not at work and why they aren't at school, that is a very different conversation than if they have heard about people getting very sick.

When you speak to your child make sure you are calm to avoid creating any additional anxiety. Your behavior will tell them how concerned they need to be as much as your words will. Don't dismiss your child's fears, do your best to allay them by letting them know that there are many people besides their parents working to keep them safe, like doctors and nurses and scientists working to find a cure. For older children you might want to explain why this virus is so different than any they may have had before.

The important thing to stress with all children is that it is essential, now more than ever, to practice good hygiene. That good hygiene will help to keep them healthy. Demonstrate for your child how to wash their hands for 20 seconds while singing the Happy Birthday song. Advise them to wash their hands, not only after using the bathroom but also before and after each meal and to cough into their elbow when they need to cough. And while we're talking about good hygiene habits and washing hands, don't forget about the importance of brushing teeth for two minutes twice a day as well.

One of the most important things we can do right now for our children is to seize this unique situation of increased time at home with our families as an opportunity to create new family traditions.

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