



When Home Isolation is Recommended for Children or Teens with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19:

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

Supporting the psychological well-being of a child or a teen for whom home isolation has been recommended for confirmed or suspected COVID-19 is just as important as following strict medical guidelines. The following are strategies to consider for parents or caregivers as well as for children and teens themselves.

CONSIDER SHARING HAVING COVID-19 (OR BEING LIKELY TO HAVE COVID-19)

MATTER-OF-FACTLY WITH OTHERS – just as celebrities and government officials are letting the world know they have tested positive for COVID-19, sharing this information with others is safer for everyone and can let others offer support.

- Just as you wouldn't hesitate telling relatives or friends about having a cold or the flu, tell them about having (or possibly having) COVID-19.
- When others know, they can offer their support, both emotionally and physically.
- Telling the story of symptoms may help having COVID-19 feel like an experience we are all sharing together.

JUST AS WHEN SICK WITH A COLD OR A FLU, HAVING COVID-19 IS A TIME TO GET TENDER LOVING CARE FROM PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS

– many of us have fond memories of being sick as a child – cuddling up in blankets, watching TV shows or movies, and getting served some favorite foods – despite not feeling well physically. Being sick with COVID-19 should be the same.

- When a child or teen needs to be in home isolation, now is the time for setting up a private, cozy area for hanging out and healing.
- Parents can even go so far as to spoil their child a little, allowing extra time on electronic devices, giving more access to shows/movies, and offering special favorite foods if possible.

EVEN THOUGH THE CHILD OR TEEN NEEDS TO BE ISOLATED FROM OTHERS IN THE HOUSEHOLD, CHECK-INS SHOULD BE FREQUENT AND PREDICTABLE

- Designate one or more caregivers who will take turns checking in on the child or teen.
 - Safety precautions must be taken as directed by medical personnel.
- Figure out easy ways the teen can communicate when they need something right away.
 - This can be by giving them their own cell phone, another electronic device with texting capabilities, or even a loud bell to ring.
 - Test out these methods so that the child or teen knows that the caregiver will respond right away.
- Discuss how often the child or teen would like someone to regularly check in.
 - This might be once an hour or more or less often, depending upon how ill the child is and his or her preferences.
- **Most importantly, the child or teen should immediately let someone know if feeling worse as is recommended by their medical providers.**

WE ARE USED TO STAYING AWAY FROM OTHER PEOPLE GENERALLY WHEN SICK, BUT BEING IN HOME ISOLATION WITH CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED COVID-19 IS SOMETHING NEW

– this is going to take some time for all of us to get used to and the effects on children and teens should be carefully considered.

- Any questions should be answered matter-of-factly and at a level that is understandable to the child's age and developmental level.
- When others know, they can offer their support, both emotionally and physically.
- Telling the story of symptoms may help having COVID-19 feel like an experience we are all sharing together.
- The need for connection with peers, particularly for teens, should be supported as much as possible with virtual connections.
- Providing comfort from close adults is also vital – this is a time for building relationships and being creative in coming up with ways to pass the time while being safe.
- The child or teen should also be reassured that the parent will stay in close contact with medical personnel, and the isolation will be over as soon as it's safe for everyone.

IF THERE ARE ANY CONCERNS WITH HOW THE CHILD OR TEEN IS EXPERIENCING THE PERIOD OF HOME ISOLATION, REACH OUT RIGHT AWAY FOR SUPPORT

– there are professionals trained to assess and treat adjustment problems that are available even now via telehealth options.

- Reach out to your child's pediatrician for mental health referrals.
- Many mental health providers are offering telehealth or telepsychology services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Reassure your child or teen that you can find someone for them to talk with to help them through this situation if needed.

AND FINALLY, STAY HOPEFUL AND OPTIMISTIC, CONTINUING TO LOOK FORWARD TO WHEN YOUR CHILD OR TEEN HAS RECOVERED AND IS CLEARED TO COME OUT OF ISOLATION.