

Uncertain times, such as the emergence of a new virus like COVID-19 or the resulting changes to day to day routines, can create stress and be difficult for children to understand. This is especially true if someone they know is sick or they hear troubling messages through the media. It is normal for children to feel worried or nervous and to have questions in such times. Children and teens react, in part, to what they see from the adults around them. It is also important to note that not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way.

Some common behavioural changes to watch for with your child may include:

- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past

Some evidence based ways to support your child include the following:

**Reassure children** about their personal safety and health. Telling children that it is okay to be concerned is comforting. Model calmness and resiliency.

**Listen to children and provide age-appropriate information.** Let them know they can talk about their feelings and ask questions. Answer questions honestly, but make sure that the information is suitable for their age level. If you don't know the answers to their questions, it's okay to say so, and together look for reliable resources that can help answer their questions. Remember, children are often listening when you talk to others about COVID-19. Keep this in mind by choosing supportive language and a calm tone. Accept whatever feelings they express.

**Maintain familiar activities and routines.** Create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.

**Monitor Physical Health and Wellbeing.** Regular physical activity, family time, quality sleep, and healthy, social meals are all important ways to ensure positive long-term health outcomes.

Thank you for considering this information and we hope you find it helpful.

**Please find some additional health resources below:**

Mental Health: [Managing Health and Anxiety](#)

Emotional Health: [Self Care](#)

Physical Health: [Health Link BC](#)

Nutrition: [Canada Food Guide](#)

Sleep: [Sleep Foundation](#)