

## Looking after the wellbeing of your children and teens

Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them.

When parents and caregivers deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children. Parents can be more reassuring to others around them, especially children, if they are better prepared.

### Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Poor school performance or avoiding school
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

### There are many things you can do to support your child

- Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak. Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is ok if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

## Caring for a child or someone else in self-isolation

You may be caring for a child, family member or someone who needs support while they are in self-isolation. If you are, follow the advice above.

You should also:

- If you have an unwell young child, try to have one person providing their care. That person should be very careful about how they interact with others who are well.
- stay away from them as much as possible (at least 1 metre) and avoid touching them - use your phone to communicate
- wash your hands properly every time you have contact with the person
- if you have face masks, wear one and have them on when you have to be in the same room
- if you have to clean phlegm or spit from their face use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands
- put them in a well-ventilated room alone
- limit their movement in the house
- get them to use a different toilet if possible
- limit the number of caregivers
- keep them away from older people, people with long-term conditions or pregnant women

If possible, only one person should look after the person self-isolating. Ideally, this would be someone who is in good health.

**Call us at the Crafter Medical Centre on 8272 5533 if stress gets in the way of you or your family's daily activities for several days in a row and we will facilitate an appointment with your doctor.**