

CORONAVIRUS

Recommendations for parents



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All information can be
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**KANTONSSPITAL
WINTERTHUR**

Dear parents

In mid-March, everyday life in Switzerland changed fundamentally for all of us from one day to another. Our accustomed structure of everyday life with school, work and hobbies suddenly disappeared, and the Federal Council's guidelines now severely restrict social contacts. Adapting to this changed everyday life is a great challenge for all of us.

As parents, you suddenly have to take on many additional tasks and provide your children with additional security during this time, full of uncertainties for everyone. This can become a great or even overwhelming challenge.

You are the most important role model for your child. His or her feelings are based on your behavior and on how you deal with the current situation. Use the time you have involuntarily gained to think about what is really important to you, your child and your family. In order to support you in coping with this situation, we will gladly provide you with various tips, ideas and further contacts.

Sozialpädiatrisches Zentrum SPZ

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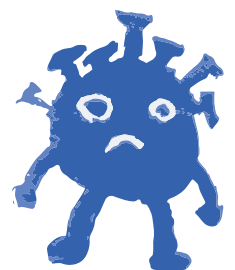
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Recommendations for parents

Age-appropriate information about the coronavirus

By now, most children and young people know exactly how to wash their hands and that you need to keep a distance between you and others. However, many people know little about the corona virus and often have wrong ideas. Accordingly, they are afraid, sometimes they react in panic. Let your child ask questions, but do not force him or her to do so. During the conversation, take up your child's existing knowledge and correct possibly false information at the same time. Your child should know that the virus does not have total power over us, because we know how to protect ourselves. You can be honest if there is something you do not know. Expand your knowledge together with child-oriented films and information on the Internet. The short film «Das Coronavirus Kindern einfach erklärt» (the coronavirus simply explained to children, in German only) by the City of Vienna offers a good basis, the picture book «Per Anhalter durch die Coronavirus-Galaxis» (hitchhiking through the coronavirus galaxy, in German and Italian only) can also be found on the Internet.

Existential fears

Some parents fear that they will be losing their jobs or suffering drastic wage cuts due to the economic consequences of the pandemic. They are desperate, experience sleepless nights and brood for hours. These fears can also be transferred to your child. Children quickly become aware of what and how we are concerned - and experience suffering in the process, which we cannot spare them. It is therefore important to inform them appropriately and according to their age. Nevertheless, we should not expect too much from them, but rather talk to adults in whom we trust and seek advice from qualified professionals.

Protect yourself and your child from too much information. It is quite sufficient to listen to or watch the news once or twice a day in order to keep up to date with the latest information and the course of this pandemic.

Children react differently - this is normal

Children and young people react differently to this extraordinary situation, just as we adults do. While some children suddenly become particularly anxious and affectionate, others react with increased withdrawal. Yet other children are suddenly much more restless than usual and become angry more quickly. Some complain more often about stomachaches or headaches. These are basically «normal» reactions to an unusual situation.

During difficult times, children especially need a lot of security, attention and affection from their parents. Listen to your child when he or she talks about his or her worries and fears. Relaxation and playing, when fun and games are the main focus, also help to regulate stress better.

Dealing with conflict and violence

In the current situation, many of us experience more stress. This can increase tension and conflict. Moreover, we as a family or a couple are not used to spending so much time together in a confined space. It is therefore especially important during this time to discuss the rules of living together and to give each other space. We would therefore recommend to get regular exercise outdoors, while observing social distancing. This helps to clear your head and get rid of pent-up energy. Define retreat times and spaces. Be generous to others and yourself. Speak with your children regularly and share with them what has proven itself as a good or bad arrangement and what solutions need to be sought.

Experience shows that in times of crisis domestic violence is more frequent. It is better to leave home for a short walk before a dispute escalates. Seek help at an early stage if you are a victim of domestic violence or if you are the violator. Many counselling centers have now expanded their availability and their range of advice available by telephone or online.

Proverbial filling stations for the heroes of the Corona crisis.

Do you realize that you are achieving extraordinary things in these times? Are you patting yourself on the back from time to time and are you also rewarding yourself for your performance from time to time? Your own health is one of the basic prerequisites for your children in order to survive these weeks well. Take care of yourself. Also keep an eye on your well-being. Take a break every now and then. Find time and space to breathe and to calm down.

Contacts

References and addresses:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Mental health in times of Corona

At **<https://dureschnufe.ch>** you can find addresses of various counselling centers and further tips on how to maintain mental health during the corona crisis.

Counselling services for parents, couples, children and youngsters

Pediatricians and family doctors, child and youth welfare services, school social work, the school psychological service as well as the psychological and psychiatric practices for children, adolescents and adults are still available. Please contact them first by phone or online. Some also offer home consultations by telephone or online (videoconferencing).

The «Paarlife Online Training» of the University of Zurich offers free training and coaching.

The «Institut Kinderseele Schweiz» foundation offers informative short films, many links and also an anonymous online counselling service for children and young people of burdened families: **<https://www.kinderseele.ch>**

The Pro Mente Sana Foundation advises mentally stressed persons and their relatives by phone and online:

<https://www.promentesana.ch/de/beratung.html>

www.projuventute.ch and the national helpline «147» offer advice for children, young people and parents.

Help for victims of domestic or sexual violence

www.okeywinterthur.ch

<https://www.frauenhaus-winterthur.ch>

<https://www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch/de>

Respite services

The City of Winterthur coordinates offers of neighbourhood assistance:

<https://stadt.winterthur.ch/themen/leben-in-winterthur/sicherheit/bevoelkerungsschutz/coronavirus/nachbarschaftshilfe>

The Swiss Red Cross and the Swiss Charitable Society (SGG) also offer a support platform for neighbourhood assistance and errands: **<https://www.fiveup.org/home>**

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