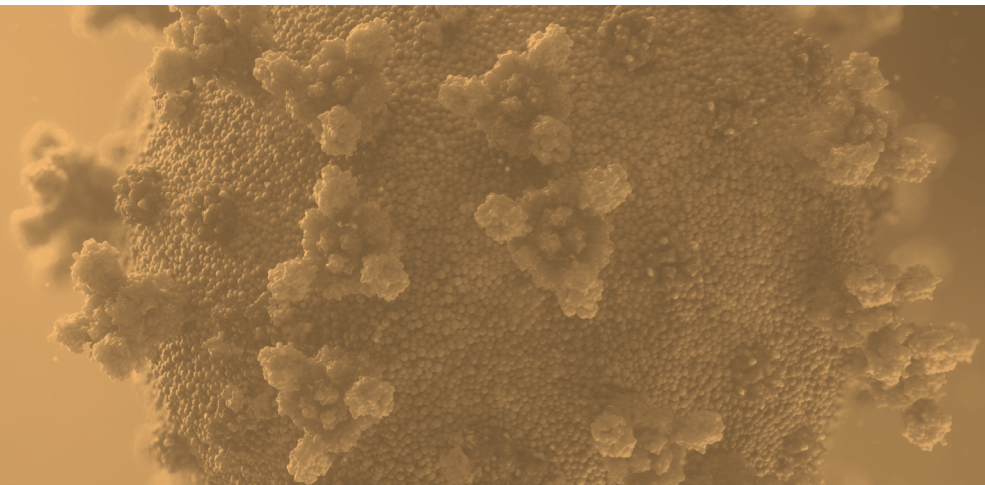




Wonders & Worries

Professional support for children
through a parent's illness.

We will, together.



Supporting Children During a Parent's Hospitalization with Covid-19

CRITICAL CARE

Explaining COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus, or group of germs, that can make people sick. It is very contagious, meaning it can quickly spread from one person to another person. COVID-19 is part of the coronavirus family, which also includes the common cold and flu. We have medicine to help protect us from catching the flu, but COVID-19 is new. Doctors do not have medicine yet to help protect people from catching it, but scientist are working very hard to create a new medicine.

Not many kids get sick from COVID-19; more adults get sick from this group of germs. We do not always know where someone catches COVID-19 because the germs are so tiny that our eye cannot see them. Germs could be hiding anywhere, especially places where lots of people go, like the grocery store or playgrounds. Germs also hide on surfaces people touch regularly, like doorknobs.

Explaining the Immune System

Our body is made up of all different kinds of cells: hair cells, skin cells, blood cells, etc. They all have a specific job that helps our body work and stay healthy. The immune system is a group of cells that protect our body

from unhealthy germs, like the coronavirus. Healthy kids and young adults have strong immune systems. Older adults, or people with other medical conditions, do not have as strong of immune systems; therefore, they might get sick more easily from germs.

Common Symptoms

People with COVID-19 may feel extra tired and have a cough and fever. Lots of rest, drinking plenty of water, and medicine for the fever can help them feel better, though sometimes this is not enough. If someone feels very sick and water, sleep, and medicine do not help, they go to the hospital for extra care. Doctors and nurses are experts at making people feel better. This is the best place to be if someone feels very sick.

What Happens at the Hospital?

Your parent is in the hospital right now because they don't feel well enough to be at home. Doctors and nurses regularly check on your parent every day and at night too. They also give your parent stronger medicine, only found in the hospital. Your parent is as safe as possible, and the medical staff is doing everything they can to help your parent feel better.

When Symptoms Worsen: Explaining Oxygen Tubes and the Ventilator

COVID-19 makes the lungs feel sick. This can make a person cough and have more trouble breathing. Sometimes bodies are strong enough to fight COVID-19 with the help of rest, fluids, and medicine. Other times, bodies have a harder time fighting COVID-19 and need extra help.

Oxygen Tubes: An oxygen tube is a small tube, that rests under the nose and helps with breathing. This tube will go away when your parent feels better.

Ventilator: If breathing becomes too difficult, an extra machine—called the ventilator—is used to help. The ventilator does all the work of the lungs so they can take a break from working so hard. While the ventilator helps the lungs rest, your parent also gets medicine that helps them sleep so their whole body can rest too. This rest keeps your parent comfortable and gives their body a better chance to heal.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IF A PARENT IS ON A VENTILATOR:

- Maintain open communication about the child's questions and concerns.
- Identify because their parent is getting medicine to help their body sleep, they are not able to talk on the phone.
- Validate not talking to, or visiting, their parent is hard; but explain social distancing, the medicine, and the ventilator are all in place to help their parent get better.
- Emphasize the hospital is the safest place their parent could be right now.
- Reassure their parent is not alone—many friendly nurses and doctors are checking on their parent regularly and taking good care of them.
- Encourage your child to write letters or cards to

the hospitalized parent. Ask if the child would like to read the letters and cards out loud to their family at home.

- Encourage the child to make artwork for the parent.
- Create a Wonders & Worries Jar (activity instructions located at www.wondersandworries.org, under “Tips & Activities” in the “For Parents” tab)

IF THE PARENT IS IMPROVING AND EXPECTED TO COME OFF THE VENTILATOR

- Acknowledge once the parent feels better, the ventilator will go away, and the parent will be able to talk on the phone again.
- Explain the parent might still feel sleepy after coming off the ventilator and will still need a lot of rest. They might stay at the hospital for several more days until they feel well enough to return home.

IF THE PARENT IS NOT IMPROVING

- Let the child know the doctors are working very hard and doing everything they can to help their parent feel better. Children may need to hear this multiple times.
- It is okay to say “I don't know” to some of the child's questions. Validate not knowing is hard.
- Encourage the child to write down any questions or concerns, as they come up. If you do not know the answer to a question, say “That's a good question. I am glad you're letting me know what you're wondering. I do not know the answer, but I will ask the doctor during our next phone call.”
- Maintain open communication throughout the parent's hospitalization.