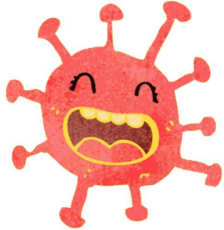


Nurse's Notes Vol. 5

by Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN

HELLO!

I am a VIRUS,
cousins with the Flu and
the Common Cold



My name is Coronavirus

I love to travel...



and to jump
from hand to
hand to say Hi



An excerpt from a free children's book by Manuela Molina about the coronavirus.

COVID-19 from a Child's Perspective...

This week I wanted to offer some information on what this virus looks like in children, and what it may present like physically as well as emotionally.

Physical Considerations

Generally, symptoms of COVID-19 are usually milder in children than what we see in adults. They may present with flu-like illness, cough, and fever. They usually do not present with shortness of breath unless they also have a history of asthma, or are compromised in other ways. We do see sore throat, muscle aches, headache and diarrhea with children, sometimes more than adults. Some children have none of these symptoms but still test positive.

If, as a parent, you feel something is off with your child and have any concern about COVID like illness, call your pediatrician. They want to know, and they value the partnership they have with families. Also, I would say that no one knows your child better than you do - so trust your instincts!

If your child presents with any trouble breathing or has blue lips or fingers, call 911. Fortunately, this is rare in children but it does happen.

An infant or very young child may present with diarrhea and fever and you will want to be on the alert for signs of dehydration. This can include less potty time, wet diapers, or inability to make tears. Keep your pediatrician updated if a child develops diarrhea - they

will guide you on what to do to replenish their fluids. Make sure all vaccines are kept up to date. This helps their overall health and ability to fight any illness.

What We Can Do

All children know that their lives have changed in some way or another right now - parents are home more, no playdates, decreased interaction with outside places and family members. See what they know, how they feel, and allow them to ask questions. This will give them a sense of control over their world. Besides making sure that children know *how* to wash their hands, make sure they know *why*.

For children older than two years old, who have no other medical issues, teach them how to wear a mask. Let them practice in the house - they may not like it at first, so even a few minutes at a time works. Try decorating the mask too - who wouldn't want a superhero mask?

For older children, honest conversation is crucial. A positive of this experience is that some families are having dinner together more. Use this time to see how each family member is feeling. When possible, try having more family interaction time - game night, movie nights once a week, etc. This will help them see how you are dealing with this situation. For middle and high school-aged children, being home so long presents its own challenges - they miss the social interaction. A clinician at John Hopkins University suggests that we as parents should worry a bit less about them reaching out via social media right now, as long as parents can monitor their interactions. Talking with one another can lessen their stress and anxiety levels by allowing them the opportunity to discuss what changes they are experiencing with people their own age.

Our children need routines now more than ever. Help them maintain their sleep/wake cycle by keeping to somewhat scheduled bedtimes, routine meals, and some form of outside exercise. Walking a younger child around their neighborhood reassures them that things still look the same. Luckily children are usually more resilient in how they deal with major stresses. They will take their cues from us - no matter what the age level. So, take care of yourself too. Watching us take care of ourselves helps children feel reassured. If we lower our stress it's a given that they will too.

If you would like more information on this or any related topic, feel free to email me at mhabershaw@iccatholicsschool.org.

Take care!