

# Essential COVID-19 Resource Guide

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## COVID-19 Contact Information

### Cook County COVID-19 Call Center

- If you are in DuPage County and have questions or concerns about COVID-19, call 708-633-3319 or email [CCDPH.COVID19@cookcountyhhs.org](mailto:CCDPH.COVID19@cookcountyhhs.org). For the latest updates, text "ALERTCOOK" to 888-777.
- Hours: Monday through Friday 9am-4pm

### Illinois COVID-19 Hotline and Email Address

- If you have questions about Coronavirus, call the Illinois Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Hotline Phone number: 1(800) 889-3931 or, Email: [DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV](mailto:DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV)
- Anytime, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## Who should I call about COVID-19?



### I want to know more about COVID-19, who should I call?

- For **general** questions about COVID\_19, you can call the IDPH COVID-19 Hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email [DPH.SICK@illinois.gov](mailto:DPH.SICK@illinois.gov). Please note that the Hotline does **not** make decisions about who should be tested for COVID-19



### I am not feeling well and have respiratory symptoms, what should I do?

- Please stay home for at least 7 days after you first became ill , or 72 hours after your fever has resolved and symptoms are improving, **whichever is longer**.
- You should consult with your doctor if you have:**
  - Fever, cough, trouble breathing, or other flu-like symptoms that are not better or are worsening after 24-48 hours.
  - Mild symptoms and are pregnant or immunosuppressed or are an older adult have chronic health conditions
- Please don't call the health department about getting testing**
  - Your health care provider will determine if you should be tested , and call the health department if needed
  - Health departments do not collect specimens for COVID-19



### I think I need immediate medical attention, who should I call?

- If you need immediate medical attention, and you think you may have COVID-19, please call ahead to your health care provider before going in for care. This will allow them to take the right steps to protect themselves and other patients
- If you think you are having a medical emergency, call 911; if you have been exposed to COVID-19, notify dispatch personnel so emergency medical services personnel

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## *What to do if you think you have been exposed*

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**If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your doctor for medical advice. By calling ahead to your doctor before going in for care, you allow the medical facility to take the right steps to protect themselves and other patients.**

If you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. They will decide whether you need to be tested, but keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home.

### **If you are at higher risk for serious illness**

People at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild.

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

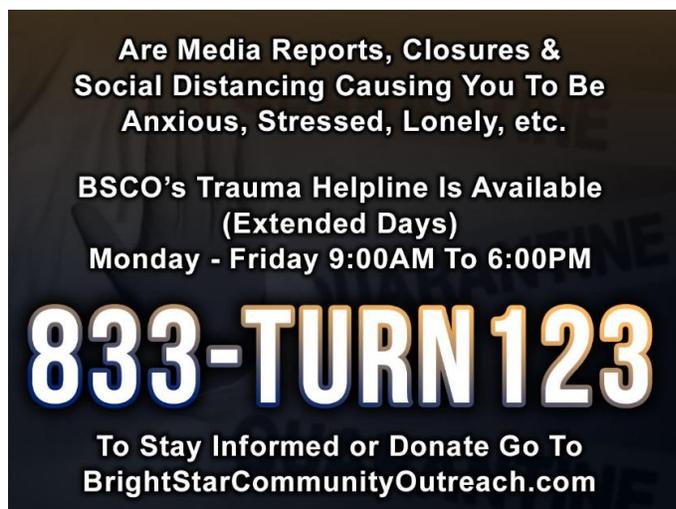
**If you believe you are experiencing life-threatening symptoms, call 9-1-1.**

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## *Stress and Anxiety Resources*

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### **Bright Star Community Outreach**

A dark blue/black rectangular graphic with white and yellow text. The text is centered and reads: 'Are Media Reports, Closures & Social Distancing Causing You To Be Anxious, Stressed, Lonely, etc.' followed by 'BSCO's Trauma Helpline Is Available (Extended Days) Monday - Friday 9:00AM To 6:00PM'. The phone number '833-TURN123' is prominently displayed in large, bold, white letters with a yellow outline. Below it, the text says 'To Stay Informed or Donate Go To BrightStarCommunityOutreach.com'.

**Are Media Reports, Closures & Social Distancing Causing You To Be Anxious, Stressed, Lonely, etc.**

**BSCO's Trauma Helpline Is Available  
(Extended Days)  
Monday - Friday 9:00AM To 6:00PM**

**833-TURN123**

**To Stay Informed or Donate Go To  
BrightStarCommunityOutreach.com**

### **NAMI Chicago Helpline**

Connect with a mental health counselor by calling 311 or directly at 833-626-4244

## Chicago Department of Public Health Mental Health Centers

Connect to free teletherapy services at by calling 312-747-1020.

- For after hours support, contact Crisis Text Line which serves anyone, in any type of crisis, 24-hours a day. Instructions: Text HELLO to: 741741 to access a trained crisis counselor.

## National Domestic Violence Hotline

Anyone affected by abuse and needing support call 1-800-799-7233, or if you are unable to speak safely, log onto thehotline.org or text LOVEIS to 22522. Available 24/7.

## YWCA Rape Crisis Hotline

The YWCA provide survivors of sexual violence and their significant others immediate support, crisis intervention and referrals for the city of Chicago and surrounding suburbs call 1-888-293-2080. Available 24/7.

**If you are in an emergency situation, please call 9-1-1.**

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## *Stress and Anxiety Resources Continued*

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**If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 24/7 free and confidential support 1-800-273-8255

### Websites:

- How to Cope With Anxiety About Coronavirus - Learn strategies for managing stress during a pandemic  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/managing-coronavirus-anxiety-4798909>
- Manage Anxiety & Stress Regarding COVID-19  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2F coping.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2F coping.html)
- COVID-19: Fast Tips on Managing Anxiety  
<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/HealthProtectionandResponse/COVID-19%20FAST%20Tips%20on%20Managing%20Anxiety%2003.11.2020.pdf>

### Tips:

- Let this be a chance to have quality time with your family at home. It's an opportunity to have the time to talk and get to know each other better, to comfort and reassure each other, and to feel more connected and closer to one another. Most importantly it's an opportunity to teach your children both through words and example how to deal with serious challenges.
- If you live alone, make sure you're reaching out to your friends and family consistently in order to feel a sense of connection that is so vital to feeling well emotionally. Ask them to make sure to touch base with you as well. This is especially crucial for any of you

struggling with depression and or anxiety. This is a unique time that has the potential not only to be very dangerous, but to be very beneficial and growthful.

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- Exercise, take walks/runs outside, and stay connected through phone, video, and other social media. But when you go outside, do your best to maintain at least six feet between you and non-family members. If you have kids, try not to use public facilities like playground structures, as coronavirus can live on plastic and metal for up to nine days, and these structures aren't getting regularly cleaned.
- Going outside will be important during these strange times, and the weather is improving. Go outside every day if you are able, but stay physically away from people outside your family or roommates. And though we may wish to visit elders in our community in person, I would not visit nursing homes or other areas where large numbers of the elderly reside, as they are at highest risk for complications and mortality from coronavirus.

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## *Food Resources*

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### **Chicago Food Depository**

The Greater Chicago Food Depository is available to anyone in need of food assistance.

<https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/>

### **Chicago Public Schools**

Every young person under 18 years old is eligible - no child will be turned away. If families have trouble getting to a site, call 1-773-553-KIDS(5437) or email at [familyservices@cps.edu](mailto:familyservices@cps.edu) to make a request for food delivery.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-1pm

### **Meals on Wheels**

Meals on Wheels supporting homebound seniors. <https://www.mealsonwheelschicago.org/>

### **The Homeless Food and Shelter Directory**

The Homelessness Food and Shelter Directory is another resource listing the Emergency Food Programs provided through Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens.

<https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/cgi-bin/id/cityfoodbanks.cgi?city=Chicago&state=IL>

### **Brave Space Alliance**

If you live on the Southside of Chicago, Brave Space Alliance is delivering food to queer and transgender individuals, regardless of immigration status. <https://www.bravespacealliance.org/>

- If you need support, please complete this form: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelaHe7IIGXJcn7lcrBK9pTYx\\_IW4kPtkR9MCLziOijBrUQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSelaHe7IIGXJcn7lcrBK9pTYx_IW4kPtkR9MCLziOijBrUQ/viewform) Information will not be shared with and government or law enforcement entity.

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## *Who to Call for Assistance*

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**Illinois Department of Human Services  
Help is Here.**

1-833-2-FIND-HELP (1-833-234-6343)

### **The unemployment offices are closed but are taking online applications for those who need to file claims.**

- If you were laid off due to COVID-19, you can go to this link to get more information on filing a claim: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/default.aspx>
- YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Workforce Team will also be available to link you to employment opportunities. Please contact us at [jobs@ywcachicago.org](mailto:jobs@ywcachicago.org)
- Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership, is listing open paid jobs for essential businesses. <https://chicookworks.org/worknow/> You can also text "WORK NOW" to 474747 to be connected to the employment resources.

**Can I get unemployment benefits?** The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has a page dedicated to answering your questions about the COVID-19 Coronavirus and Illinois Unemployment Benefits. IDES recently adopted emergency rules to try to make the unemployment insurance system as responsive to the current situation as possible. You will find useful information such as who and when a person may qualify for unemployment benefits during the pandemic.

<https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/COVID-19-and-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx>

### **Additionally if you any of the following concerns, please use the links below:**

To file an Unemployment Insurance claim,

<https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/aboutides/Pages/10%20Things%20You%20Should%20Know.aspx>

If you have questions about Unemployment Insurance, please call our Customer Service Center at **800-244-5631** or 866-488-4016 TTY.

### **To certify for Unemployment Insurance benefits,**

[https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/Certify\\_Weekly\\_Benefits.aspx](https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/Certify_Weekly_Benefits.aspx) or call Tele-Serve at 312-338-4337 Monday – Friday 5:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. To post your resume, search job postings, or find a job, visit [www.illinoisjoblink.com](http://www.illinoisjoblink.com).

**Am I eligible for any health insurance or food assistance?** If your income has dropped or stopped, the Illinois Department of Human Services has information on government assistance programs to help with health insurance, food, and other needed resources. This website has eligibility information, a list of information needed to apply, and a link to apply for benefits.

<http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=33698>

**Where can I access information about housing assistance and housing-related emergencies?** YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has a new strategic relationship with Partners in Community Building, Inc., a housing counseling agency approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Together we can provide our clients with access to comprehensive housing services at several Southside and South Suburban locations. They can assist with the following services: foreclosure prevention, emergency services grants, and CEDA Home Energy Assistance Programs. You can reach their staff by phone at 312-328-0873 for assistance and for their intake process.

<https://www.picbchicago.org/>

**What do I do if I need to make emergency withdrawals from my pre-tax retirement plan?** The Internal Revenue Service allows “hardship withdrawals” from certain retirement plans when you’re faced with an “immediate and heavy” financial need. A retirement plan, such as a 401(K) or 403(b), might offer hardship withdrawals but is not required to and other plans, like IRA’s, have different rules, so you’ll need to check with your specific plan.

<https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/retirement-plans-faqs-regarding-hardship-distributions#2>

A withdrawal is not considered necessary by the IRS if you still have other options open to you, like getting a bank loan or selling assets. You can find more information on the pros and cons of options to increase your income in University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension’s program **Increasing Your Income** **handout**. If the worst should happen and a person needs to declare bankruptcy in the future, also keep in mind that retirement accounts are protected from creditors in a bankruptcy and can be used to start over.

**How can I protect myself financially from the impact of the coronavirus?** This site from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau features useful information on what to do if you have trouble paying your bills, experience a loss of income, or think you have been targeted by a scammer.

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/>

**Where can I go for help with essential City of Chicago services related to COVID-19?** Call 311 or visit this site for referrals to food assistance, paying housing bills, accessing free child care, or obtaining help with other needs. Clicking on the orange text above will take you to a special site with the City of Chicago’s most current information on the COVID-19 situation. You’ll be able to learn more about what is available and in real-time.

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home.html>

**What if I can’t make my IRS tax payment?** The Internal Revenue Service has established a special section focused on steps to help taxpayers, businesses and others affected by the COVID-19 coronavirus.

<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>

**What can my small business do when our sales have dropped or stopped?** The Small Business Administration provides low-interest disaster loans to help businesses and homeowners recover from declared disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19>

**What if I can’t make my federal student loan payment?** The U.S. Department of Education has information and links on repaying student loans and what to do if you’re unable to make your loan payments. The White House did announce that a program would be put in place to ‘pause’ the interest on federal loans to support impacted student borrowers though it’s unclear how and when that option will be available.

<https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment>

**What if I can’t make my mortgage payment or my car loan?** The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau provides tips and resources for working with creditors. As you plan for the potential impact of the coronavirus, there are a number of steps that you can take to help protect yourself or a loved one financially, both in the short and long term.

[https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/#anchor\\_income-loss](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/#anchor_income-loss)

**What national government resources are available?** For answers to other questions, find a complete list of government agency resources related to COVID-19, including Health and Human Service updates and a link to the Federal Trade Commission’s website tracking scams related to the virus.

<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

**What if I experience virus-related price gouging on consumer goods?** Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul said his office is investigating widespread reports of

price-gouging. The most important thing that the public can do to assist the State is to report incidents of price-gouging online by completing the Consumer Complaint On-Line Submission Form. <https://ccformsubmission.ilattorneygeneral.net/> 8  
Also, please do not hoard any supplies that would help to prevent the spread of COVID-19, to make sure everyone can get the products they need, especially professional health care providers.  
[https://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2020\\_03/20200317b.html](https://illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2020_03/20200317b.html)

### **What can I go to learn more about money management for myself and my family?**

MoCaFi, short for Mobile Capital Finance, Inc., offers a platform that seeks to provide banking services to the underbanked while helping them build credit and improve their economic mobility. MoCaFi provides low-cost personalized access to banking, credit, and wealth-building financial services that guide your path to economic mobility View their blog for empowering articles on topics such as credit, savings, and budgeting.  
<https://mocaifi.com/blog/>

You can also check out their financial coaching videos to create a solid financial foundation for yourself – even during this epidemic.

<https://fast.wistia.net/embed/channel/sxl2vliclm?wchannelid=sxl2vliclm>

**How can I educate my children on family finances while they are home from school?** Next Gen Personal Finance, where you'll find lessons for all grade levels on topics like saving, budgeting, managing credit, and dealing with financial pitfalls.

<https://www.ngpf.org/>

## **Additional Economic Information**

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE:** Individuals without access to paid sick leave or unable to work due to COVID-19 can apply for unemployment insurance under the administration's expansion. The governor's executive order waives the 7-day waiting period for residents to apply for unemployment benefits, meaning anyone who qualifies can file and become immediately eligible instead of experiencing a week-long lag during this challenging time. Gov. Pritzker is working with the federal delegation and congressional leadership to push the Trump administration to allow the state to increase the length of benefits beyond 26 weeks as this crisis continues to provide significant fiscal challenges for Illinois families.

**RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM:** provides financial assistance to Chicago residents, to prevent homelessness, to eligible individuals and families who are in danger of eviction in order to stabilize individuals and families in their existing rental unit.

[https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/serv/svcs/how\\_to\\_find\\_rentalassistan ceinchicago.html?fbclid=IwAR2Gpz9YR92TernnWkGc4AsVSBfBAjbg5H-I3JoDAd3GwPmKtcCr6LwTXYU](https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/provdrs/serv/svcs/how_to_find_rentalassistan ceinchicago.html?fbclid=IwAR2Gpz9YR92TernnWkGc4AsVSBfBAjbg5H-I3JoDAd3GwPmKtcCr6LwTXYU).

**UTILITY RELIEF:** Gov. Pritzker and Attorney General Raoul have urged the Illinois Commerce Commission to immediately institute a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies across Illinois – including energy, telecommunications and water – until the state disaster proclamation has been lifted. The administration is also requesting changes to payment and collection policies to ensure Illinoisans aren't saddled with utility debt as a result of COVID-19. Several have announced plans to maintain services and waive late payment fees.

**MEDICAID WAIVER:** The administration is in the process of filing a federal waiver to expand Medicaid coverage, beginning work on the waiver application as soon as the federal government declared a national emergency and activated the Stafford Act. If the federal waiver is approved, the state will be able to expand Medicaid services through the addition of new medical providers, increased access across the state and ramped up services to many of the state's most vulnerable populations.

## **Questions and Answers from Illinois Department of Human Services**

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## Childcare Resources

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**Q: Even though schools are closed, are child care facilities (home and center based) required to close?**

No, licensed child care centers and homes are not required to close, but are allowed to close. Parents should contact their provider to make sure they are operating. Early education programs in public and private schools are required to close while the schools are closed.

**Q: Why are child care programs able to stay open when schools are required to close?**

As long as parents are working, we want families to have access to a safe place for their children to receive care. That said, we should anticipate that these small businesses may experience the same operational issues as schools, if they haven't already, and anticipate many program closures.

**Q: Is child care still safe?**

We have instructed child care programs to follow the guidelines provided by the Illinois Public Health Department and the CDC. You can see these resources on the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development website. Child care programs are experts in caring for children and meeting the needs of working families in our state. Licensed providers provide care that meets health and safety standards each day.

**Q: What should I do if I need to find care for my child?**

If you need child care because you are still working and your child care facility or school is closed, contact 1-888-228-1146 or visit <https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/> or <https://www.excelerateillinois.com/contact-us-menu>.

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## Internet Resources

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Comcast recently announced measures to ensure people stay connected to the Internet as more schools suspend classes and companies encourage employees to work from home due to COVID-19. **Comcast will implement the following new policies for the next 60 days:**

- Xfinity WiFi hotspots across the country will be available to anyone who needs them for free, including non-Xfinity Internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity WiFi hotspots, visit [www.xfinity.com/wifi](http://www.xfinity.com/wifi). Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.
- Comcast will pause its data plans for 60 days, giving all customers unlimited data for no additional charge.
- Comcast will not disconnect a customer's Internet service or assess late fees if they contact Comcast and let the company know they can't pay their bills during this period. Comcast will be available to offer flexible payment options and can help find other solutions.
- Low-income families who live in a Comcast service area can sign-up for Internet Essentials. New customers will receive 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service.
- For all new and existing Internet Essentials customers, the speed of the program's Internet service was increased to 25 mbps downstream and 3 mbps upstream. This increase will go

into effect for no additional fee, and it will become the new base speed for the program going forward.

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- For those with school-age students at home, Comcast has created new educational collections for all grade levels in partnership with Common Sense Media. Just say "education" into your X1 or Flex voice remote. To help keep customers informed, Comcast also has created a collection of the most current news and information on COVID-19. Just say "Coronavirus" into your X1 or Flex voice remote

For more information and updates from Comcast related to Coronavirus, visit [ComcastCorporation.com/COVID-19](https://ComcastCorporation.com/COVID-19).

#### **To access this service:**

Comcast will send all new customers a free self-install kit that includes a cable modem with a Wi-Fi router. There will be no term contract or credit check and no shipping fee.

To sign up, applicants can simply visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com). The accessible website also includes the option to video chat with customer service agents in American Sign Language. There are also two dedicated phone numbers 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

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## ***How to Talk to Your Children About COVID-19***

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#### **Websites:**

##### **10 tips for talking about COVID-19 with your kids**

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/10-tips-for-talking-about-covid-19-with-your-kids>

##### **COVID-19: Guidance for Parents in Talking to Children about Coronavirus**

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/cdph/HealthProtectionandResponse/COVID-19%20Talking%20to%20Children%2003.21.2020.pdf>

##### **Helping Children Cope with Emergencies**

<https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/helping-children-cope.html>

##### **Coronavirus (COVID-19): How to Talk to Your Child**

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-how-talk-child.html>

##### **How to talk to children about the coronavirus**

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-coronavirus-2020030719111>

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## *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

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**Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/share-facts.html>

**Frequently Asked Questions**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

**If You Are at Higher Risk**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>

**How It Spreads**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html>

**Protect Your Family**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/protect-family.html>

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## *YWCA Metropolitan Chicago Updates*

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<https://ywcachicago.org/about/news/covid-19/>

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago provides information and resources via our MPWR app. MPWR can provide access to virtual training opportunities, engaging community forums, upcoming events and activities. You can download the MPWR app from the Apple Store or Google Play. Visit our website for more information. <https://ywcachicago.org/about/mpwr/>

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## *Resources for Staying Productive Working from Home*

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**5 Tips for Staying Productive and Mentally Healthy While You're Working From Home**

<https://time.com/5801725/work-from-home-remote-tips/>

**23 Essential Tips for Working Remotely**

<https://www.inc.com/lindsey-pollak-eileen-coombes/remote-work-home-productivity-communication-self-care-morale-team.html>

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## *Resources for News Updates*

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<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-coronavirus-pandemic-chicago-illinois-news-20200317-hztkm3zsfmzi7sgdege2s7z4-story.html>

<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/resources.html>