

23

Number of confirmed cases in Botswana

9066

Number of tests carried out, 9043 negative

9

Number of recoveries, 14 active cases.

1

Number of lives lost to an infection of COVID-19

Above figures are as of 7 May.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) What you need to know about the virus and how to support children during the pandemic

COVID-19 pandemic has upended the lives of children and their families as health systems buckle, borders close, and schools and businesses shutter. As COVID-19 has spread, so has misinformation – fuelling discrimination and stigma. This edition is bringing trustworthy guidance to parents, caregivers and educators, to promote facts over fear. It also provides guidance on possible intervention that stakeholders can adopt, to minimise the impact of COVID19 on children.

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How to talk to your child about COVID-19

It is easy to feel overwhelmed by everything you are hearing about COVID-19 right now. It is also understandable if your children are feeling anxious.

Children might find it difficult to understand what they are seeing online or on TV – or hearing from other people – so they can be particularly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety, stress and sadness. But having an open, supportive discussion with your children can help them understand, cope and even make a positive contribution for others.

1. Ask open questions and listen

Start by inviting your child to talk about the issue. Find out how much they already know and follow their lead. If they are particularly young and have not already heard about the outbreak, you may not need to raise the issue – just take the chance to remind them about good hygiene practices without introducing new fears. Make sure you are in a safe environment and allow your child to talk freely. Drawing, stories and other activities may help to open up a discussion.

2. Be honest: explain the truth in a child-friendly way

Children have a right to truthful information about what's going on in the world, but adults also have a

responsibility to keep them safe from distress. Use age-appropriate language, watch their reactions, and be sensitive to their level of anxiety. If you can't answer their questions, don't guess. Use it as an opportunity to explore the answers together.

3. Show them how to protect themselves and their friends

One of the best ways to keep children safe from coronavirus and other diseases is to simply encourage regular handwashing. It doesn't need to be a scary conversation. You can also show children how to **cover a cough or a sneeze with their elbow**, explain that it's best not to get too close to people who have those symptoms, and ask them to tell you if they start to feel like they have a fever, cough or are having difficulty breathing.

4. Offer reassurance

When we are seeing lots of troubling images on TV or online, it can sometimes feel like the crisis is all around us. Children may not distinguish between images on screen and their own personal reality, and they may believe they're in imminent danger. You can help your children cope with the stress by making opportunities for them to play and relax, when possible. Keep regular routines and schedules as much as possible, especially before they go to sleep, or help create new ones in a new environment.



Photo credit: Teddyrawpixel.com

5. Check if they are experiencing or spreading stigma

The outbreak of coronavirus has brought with it numerous reports of racial discrimination around the world, so it is important to check that your children are neither experiencing nor contributing to bullying. Explain that coronavirus has nothing to do with what someone looks like, where they are from or what language they speak.

6. Look for the helpers

It is important for children to know that people are helping each other with acts of kindness and generosity. Share stories of health workers, scientists and young people, among others, who are working to stop the outbreak and keep the community safe.

7. Take care of yourself

You will be able to help your kids better if you are coping, too. Children will pick up on your own response to the news, so it helps them to know you're calm and in control. If you are feeling anxious or upset, take time for yourself and reach out to other family, friends and trusted people in your community. Make some time to do things that help you relax and recuperate.

Potential impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on children

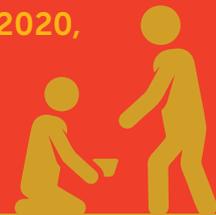
The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's wellbeing, including health, education and safety are far-reaching. However, the harmful effects of this pandemic will not be distributed equally. The world's poorest children already face a precarious existence and the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on their lives pose a threat to their survival and development.

In Botswana, a significant number of children in marginalised communities depend on the meals and safety provided by schools and Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. In addition to poor children, there are other vulnerable categories of children who are also at risk of reduced access to protection and basic services. Some of these risks are listed below, and for each, specific protection must be put in place by policy makers, parents and caregivers.

As of mid-April, 188 countries have imposed countrywide school closures, affecting more than 1.5 billion children and youth.



Globally, more than 42 million children could fall into extreme poverty in 2020, adding to the 2019 estimated of 386 million children already living in extreme poverty.



Malnutrition is expected to rise as more than 368 million children across 143 countries who normally rely on school meals for a reliable source of daily nutrition must now look to other sources ¹.

¹ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_children_16_april_2020.pdf



- Children in confined spaces may witness or suffer violence and abuse.
 - > Health, education and child services staff must understand COVID-19 related child protection risks, including sexual exploitation and abuse and how to safely report concerns.
 - > Information on referral and other support services should be as widely disseminated as possible to ensure it is available for all children and caregivers.

- Children may suffer secondary effects of caregivers' or communities' increased stress levels and suffer sexual exploitation and child labour.
 - > Interim care centers and families/caregivers, including child-headed households and foster families, should focus on emotional support and encouragement for children to engage in appropriate self-care.
 - > Special measures should be made for families whose income generating opportunities have been affected.

- Children who experience family breakdowns during this period of heightened stress risk losing the sense of support and security on which their wellbeing depends.
 - > Engaging children, particularly adolescents, in assessing how

COVID-19 affects them differently can help to inform appropriate interventions by all stakeholders.

- > Support to parents and caregivers should include how to talk about the pandemic with children, as well as how to manage their own mental health and the mental health of their children.

- Children affected by the suspension of immunization campaigns and inhibited access to

essential health services are at risk of compromised health, growth and well-being.

- > Prioritised continuity of child-centred services, including schooling, nutrition programmes, maternal and newborn care, HIV treatment, immunization, community-based child protection programmes, and case management for vulnerable children.

- > Children who have fewer tools to benefit from distance learning, whether through television, radio or an online device, are more likely to struggle to catch up on learning or to drop out of school altogether.
- > Special measures should be made for disadvantaged families so that their children receive the tools necessary to also benefit from distance learning.

World Immunization Week 2020

World Immunization Week – celebrated in the last week of April (24 to 30 April) – aims to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. Immunization saves millions of lives every year and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. The theme this year is [#VaccinesWorkforAll](#). The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought with it fear and uncertainty. Many parents are asking about when there will be a COVID-19 vaccine and what to do about routine childhood vaccinations during the pandemic. Below are answers to the

most common questions.

When will the vaccine for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) be available?

As of now [30 April], there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. Scientists around the world are working hard to develop a vaccine against the disease. In fact, many different vaccines are being developed simultaneously, with two of them at the front of the process. Innovative approaches to vaccine development are being used, based partially in what was learned from the responses to Ebola and SARS.

Should my child still get routine vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic?

While COVID-19 is disrupting our daily lives, the short answer is yes, do try to get your child vaccinated where services are available. It is important that children and babies keep their vaccinations up to date because they protect them from serious diseases. It

means that when your children can return to interacting with other children, they'll have protection from some other diseases too.

What do you think we can learn from this outbreak? What can it teach us about other diseases and the decision to vaccinate?

This outbreak reminds us of how

valuable vaccines are. It shows us that when there is a vaccine available for a disease, we should keep our children and ourselves up to date with that vaccination. Without the protection of vaccines, diseases can spread quickly and with terrible consequences.

Click on the boxes below to explore some parenting tips

1. ONE-TO-ONE TIME	2. KEEPING IT POSITIVE
3. GET STRUCTURED	4. BAD BEHAVIOUR
5. KEEP CALM & MANAGE STRESS	

Children at risk of sexual abuse during lockdown

All around the world, there have been increased reporting of sexual abuse, following lockdowns, and so we need to all speak up if we know/suspect of sexual abuse.

UNICEF therefore recommends that stakeholders and protection authorities take concrete steps to ensure protection of children is integral to all COVID-19 prevention and control measures, including:

- Train health, education and child services staff on COVID-19 related child protection risks, including on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and how to safely report concerns;
- Train first responders on how to manage disclosure of gender-based violence and collaborate with healthcare services to support GBV survivors;
- Increase information sharing on referral and other support services available for children;
- Engage children, particularly adolescents, in assessing how

COVID-19 affects them differently to inform programming and advocacy;

- Put in place concrete measures to prevent child-family separation, and ensure support for children left alone without adequate care due to the hospitalization or death of a parent or caregiver; and
- Ensure the protection of all children is given the utmost consideration in disease control measure.