



Coping with Isolating During COVID-19

Families and children

Being a case or close contact can be stressful for children and parents. It's normal for people told to stay home to experience a wide range of emotion, such as:

- Fear and worry about your health and the health of your family.
- Stress around taking unexpected time off regular activities, boredom and loneliness, losing income, getting groceries and other supplies, testing, or being monitored by public health.
- Guilt that your family may have exposed others to the virus and they will have to stay home.
- Fear that others will be angry with your family or afraid of catching the virus from your family.

Strategies to cope while you must stay home



Focus on the big picture

Your family is making a difference by staying home. Public Health and others are grateful for your effort to keep the community safe by limiting the spread of COVID-19.



Take care of yourself

Parenting in isolation is hard. You'll have more energy and patience if you take care of your physical health. It will also help with your child's mood and behaviour. Small things – like eating breakfast, having a quiet moment, and getting enough sleep – can make a big difference.



Find solutions

Identify the stressors you can control and find solutions. For example, the Government of Canada web site (covid-benefits.alpha.canada.ca/en/start) has information on financial support for isolating. Reach out virtually to family, friends, or neighbours – many people are willing to help.



Talk about having to stay home with your child

- Use reliable sources to prepare for the conversation, such as tbdhu.com/coronavirus
- Stay calm and be reassuring.
- Share factual information about why your child must stay home. Answer questions directly and honestly. It's ok not to have all the answers.
- Be supportive. It is normal for children to have a wide range of emotions. Listen to them. Acknowledge that isolation is hard.
- Encourage your child to focus anger toward the virus not people. It's invisible and spreads easily.



Make a daily plan together

Routines offer security and predictability to children. Structure your days with a routine that includes; getting enough sleep, healthy eating (tbdhu.com/health-topics/healthy-eating), being active indoors, quiet time, doing activities together, getting outside, and staying connected by phone or virtually with family and friends. Check out activeforlife.com for activities you can do at home.



Practice compassion

Acknowledge that isolating can be stressful. Try not to think about negative outcomes, changing actions from the past, or assume what others think of the situation. Take time to share one positive thing that happened during the day. Celebrate what you each did well. Work towards creating a story of how you got through this experience together.



Be patient

Children often express stress by “acting out”, being irritable or extra quiet, having physical complaints like tummy aches, or temporarily losing a previously acquired skill. Take a moment to calm down before responding to difficult behaviours or emotions. Visit tbdhu.com/health-topics/parenting for information and tips on responding to children’s emotions and behaviours.

Reach out for help

Help is available if you or your children are experiencing distress during or after the isolation period or if you are concerned about a change in their mood, thoughts, or behaviour.

Parenting questions

For parenting resource questions call the TBDHU Family Health Program: (807) 625-5900 or toll-free 1-888-294-6630 or, the Children’s Centre Thunder Bay (807) 343-5000

Need help now

24/7 Thunder Bay Crisis Support: 346-8282

District/Toll-Free: 1-888-269-3100

Talk4Healing(talk or text): 1-855-554-HEAL (4325)
or visit talk4healing.com to live chat.

Information

TBDHU Youth Mental Health tbdhu.com/youthmentalhealth

Children’s Mental Health Ontario Family Care Centre family.cmho.org

Sick Kids’ COVID-19 Learning Hub aboutkidshealth.ca/COVID-19