

February Parent Newsletter

Protect Your Family and Community From Illness

Have you been worried by pictures and news from around the world about the new coronavirus that is making people sick? What exactly is a coronavirus? And what can we, as parents do to keep our families healthy? Fortunately, there are [easy steps we can take](#), and teach our children, to stay well and prevent the spread of illness.

A coronavirus is a type of virus that can infect animals and people. Its name comes from its appearance because corona means crown or halo. Under a microscope the virus looks like it has parts pointing out, like a halo – try to imagine how a child draws a sun, with lines going out from the center circle.

Of course, this virus isn't child's play. It's important to be aware of all the illnesses out there. But we must keep perspective: our families currently have a greater chance of getting the flu or norovirus than the new coronavirus. Both the flu and the norovirus can be serious illnesses for anyone who can't fight them, like

babies, grandparents, or someone with a compromised immune system.

We can also help others in our communities by looking out for neighbors or friends who might need help. A single mom with a sick baby might need a couple grocery items, or an ill, elderly neighbor might appreciate a plate of food. Small gestures can mean so much and are a wonderful example for our children.

Oregon flu levels are currently high, but there are many things you can do to keep your family healthy. Make sure you doing what you can to prevent illness in your family and for others. Check out our tips below.



**Hand-washing
can prevent up to
21% of respiratory
illnesses and
up to 40%
gastrointestinal
illnesses!**

[CDC statistics](#)

- Get a flu shot every year for everyone in your family, ages 6 months and up.
- Wash your hands often and teach your children how to wash with soap – even little ones can learn this important habit.
- Limit contact with those who have been sick, and keep your sick family members away from others. Help keep everyone healthy!
- Wash your children's toys regularly and

wipe down high-use surfaces like door-knobs.

- Use tissues to cover sneezes and coughs, and teach your children how to do this, plus the importance of handwashing after sneezing or coughing.
- Practice wellness techniques within your family like eating healthy, regular check-ups with your child's doctor, lots of play and exercise, and a regular sleep routine.

Be Prepared for All Kinds of Illness

When was the last time you cleaned out your medicine supply? For most of us, it's probably been too long, and that is a concern. Not only are expired medicines potentially ineffective, but they could also be dangerous, especially in the wrong hands. Take time now to clean out and restock your medicine with these four steps, so you are prepared and ready.

1 First, out with the old. Gather all the medicines from throughout your home. Check for expired medications and any that were prescribed for a previous illness/injury, especially pain medications that can be abused or stolen.

2 Next, get rid of old medicines. Don't flush medicine in the toilet because it can pollute the water supply for animals and humans. Instead, take them to a [drop-off location](#) or to a community disposal event.

3 Then, restock with the basics, depending on the needs of your family. Start with a [list of common over-the-counter medications](#) and place all medications and vitamins in a container with a lid.

4 Lastly, always store medicines [Up, Away, and Out of Sight](#). This means storing them up above where a child can reach/climb, after every use, and never left where children can see them.

Nation-wide, a child under 6 goes to the ER **every 9 minutes** because they got into medicine that was not stored safely.

SafeKids.org

Poison Prevention

1-800-222-1222

Post in your home
and store in your phone!

Talk to your child about medicine safety including what the medicine is for and why only an adult can give it them, and that medicine is not candy.

Ask those who visit your home and have medications in their purse or belongings to store them in a closet or somewhere out of sight, for the safety of your children.



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