How to Talk with your Children about Ebola

With so much Ebola in the news, chances are your children have heard about it. You can help your children understand what is happening here in the United States and in West Africa by talking directly. Direct talk about Ebola can make it seem even scarier to a child. You can talk to them about your child's age, development, and concerns.

Gently correct inaccurate information.

If your children have received incorrect information about Ebola, give the correct information clearly, using words they understand.

To check facts about Ebola, use reliable sources, such as the CDC website, your pediatrician, or the health department.

Remind your children that they shouldn't be afraid to play with friends or classmates who may have been in Africa or have heard something that may scare them.

Allow your children to express their feelings and help them cope.

If they are worried, they should be worried. Instead, encourage them to talk about how they are feeling.

Allow your children to express their worries. For example, tell your children that when you heard about Ebola in West Africa, you felt sad for the families of those who died.

Help your children deal with their feelings and the help them cope.

Tell your children how you dealt with your feelings and then help them develop strategies for dealing with their own feelings.

For younger children, it is particularly important to keep your answers simple and direct. But even for older children, who may be confused or worried, it is best to start simply. Then talk to them about what you would like.

It is better to ask a question that you know the answer to, but talk of reliable sources of information, such as the CDC website, your pediatrician, or the health department.

Is it true Ebola is killing lots of people?

Ebola is a serious illness. Scientists are working to make medicines that can cure Ebola. But scientists also know that you can protect yourself and your healthy family members. There have been very few people who have caught Ebola in the United States.

Can I catch Ebola?

Ebola doesn't spread from person to person unless the person is feeling sick. So people should not worry about being near someone who has been around someone who has been sick with Ebola.

What can I do so I don't catch Ebola?

Even though Ebola is very serious in the United States, it is always good to think about how to protect yourself and your family. You can wash your hands, use hand sanitizer, avoid people who are sick, and go to a doctor if you have symptoms of illness.

How do I know if I have Ebola?

The symptoms of Ebola, such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and sore throat, can be like symptoms of other illnesses. The best way to know if you have Ebola is to get medical care immediately. It can help if you can tell your doctor about your travel and work histories.