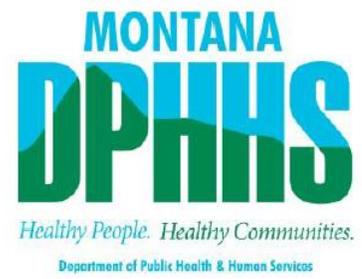


# Top 10 Tips for Families



## During the COVID-19 pandemic



**Ask for Help** Talking to others to help keep stress to a minimum can help both adults and children manage worries and anxiety. The FREE [Crisis Text Line](#) offers 24/7 access to crisis counselors via text message – just text ‘mt’ to the number **741-741**. The Montana Suicide Prevention Hotline is also available 24/7 at [1-800-273-TALK](#) (8255).



**Encourage one another** to ask questions and talk about feelings related to the outbreak. Use the information provided on the DPHHS website [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) and the [CDC](#) to get up-to-date information and guidance.



**Practice Prevention** strategies such as handwashing and covering coughs. This reduces the risk of infection and can give parents and children a sense of control, which can reduce anxiety. Visit the [CDC's Handwashing Website](#) for more information on teaching kids the best techniques for prevention.



**Routine and structure** are a vital part of maintaining balance and “normalcy” during this time. Involving children in creating a routine that includes all daily activities: hygiene, learning, reading, exercise, nutrition, play, and rest.



**Stay Connected.** Help address isolation and social distancing by writing cards and letters, making crafts, and calling or video-chatting with friends and family. Simple steps for using online video chat platforms can be found at [Setting Up Online Meetings: Help!](#). People in recovery can also check out this article on [Shatter Proof](#) on how to stay supported, connected, and healthy during COVID-19.



**Family Time.** Play and have fun together as a family. Playing board games, trivia games, or doing something outdoors as a family such as a hike or lawn game can help with feelings of isolation and increase connectivity among family members during this time. Involve kids in sanitizing the items used for play after use. For more information on resources for parenting, please visit [ParentingMontana.org/Resources](https://parentingmontana.org/resources).



**Use the internet responsibly.** Keep social media to a minimum and use sites for learning rather than filling time shopping or browsing useless sites. Plan out time on the internet so that it doesn't become the daily focus. For more information, check out Montana Public Radio's [Cyber Attacks article](#).



**Take care of yourself.** Parents can teach children about wellness by building in time for rest and self-preservation activities such as reading a book, watching a comedy movie, or doing stretches and yoga exercises. For additional tips on activities to promote health and wellness during this time, check out this article from the [Chopra Center](#) on how to stay calm and support your immune system.



**Be accessible.** People need reassurance during crisis. Be honest with your family members (especially children). Give age appropriate information as they ask questions and let them know you are available and will help keep yourself and the family well. PBS for Parents offers some great information on [How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#). Another great source of information is on [KidsHealth.org](#).



**Relax** and remember we are part of a caring community with many resources to keep you up to date. Community response to COVID-19 is evolving daily. Know where to get accurate help and information to maintain the mental and physical wellness of your children and family. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers some great information on [Mental Health Coping Strategies](#) during COVID-19. You can also check out the American Psychological Association's plethora of resources on the [APA.org pandemic page](#).