How to Talk with your Children about Ebola

With so much about 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 with them directly. Not talking about Ebola can make it seem even scarier to a child. You tailor these ideas to fit your child’s age, development, and concerns.

Ask your children: What have you heard about Ebola?

- Listen for what they have heard, correct misconceptions.
- This is a time to let them know what they have heard is not true.
- Be sure to keep your answers simple and direct.

Gently correct inaccurate information.

- Ask your children: What have you heard about Ebola?
- Correct them using simple words they can understand.
- Use reliable sources of information, such as the CDC website.

Tell them what is true.

- It is true that Ebola is a disease that can kill people.
- It is true that the United States has done a lot to try to keep everyone well.
- It is true that there have been very few people who have caught Ebola in the United States.
- It is true that we have learned a lot about how to keep people from catching Ebola.
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Answer their questions about Ebola in ways that will reassure, not scare them.

- If your children have questions, respond to them.
- You can tailor these ideas for your child’s age.
- If your child asks you a question that you don’t know how to answer, look to reliable sources of information, such as the CDC website.

You can reassure your children by telling them:

- Ebola doesn’t spread from one person to another
- Only blood, saliva, feces, vomit, or semen can spread Ebola
- Family members and friends can take steps to keep themselves healthy
- Ebola is very rare in the United States

Here are some questions children may ask and some possible answers.

1. How do I know if I have Ebola?
   - The symptoms of Ebola, such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, and bad headache, are very similar to those of other illnesses. Only blood, saliva, feces, vomit, or semen can spread Ebola.
   - In the United States, there have been very few people who have caught Ebola.
2. Can I catch Ebola?
   - Ebola doesn’t spread from one person to another.
   - Only blood, saliva, feces, vomit, or semen can spread Ebola.
   - In the United States, there have been very few people who have caught Ebola.
3. How to find out how to keep healthy.
   - If you do not need to worry about having Ebola.
   - It is true that Ebola is killing lots of people.
   - In the United States, there have been very few people who have caught Ebola.
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5. What can I do to stay healthy?
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