

# **better together\***

**\*This book is best read together,  
grownup and kid.**

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**COVID-19**

\*coronavirus disease 2019

**by Malia Jones**



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## Intro

**T**he world is facing an unprecedented public health crisis. I study epidemics and I have a good understanding of what's happening, and I have felt uncertain and vulnerable over these last few weeks too. A lot of adults are feeling uncertain and afraid.

As a parent (and a scientist), I know that kids can tell when we have negative emotions--when we feel afraid, worried, lonely, angry, or sad. I want to teach my kids that it's okay to have feelings and talk about them. I want them to know that we've got each other, and that it feels better to have an honest conversation than to try to hide our feelings.

You might not be an epidemiologist, but you are definitely the expert your kids need to lead a conversation. They're ready to talk about it. I wrote this book to give you a starting point for that conversation.

Hi my name is Malia.  
And I'm a Social Epidemiologist\*.

\*Not to be confused with a friendly hippopotamus.

That means that I'm a scientist who studies how human diseases spread.

A diagram consisting of a central text node and seven arrows radiating outwards from it. The text node is located on the left side of the image and contains the sentence "That means that I'm a scientist who studies how human diseases spread." The arrows are light blue and point in various directions: one points up and to the left, one points straight up, one points up and to the right, one points straight down, one points down and to the right, one points straight down, and one points down and to the left.

This is my book about a new disease called

# COVID-19.

Do you know what that stands for?



It stands for:

**coronavirus disease 2019**

(because it started in the year 2019).



By now you've definitely already heard

about **COVID-19** or, its more common name, **coronavirus**, because everyone  
is talking about it

ALL the time.....

.....It's a pandemic\*.



\*A pandemic is a disease outbreak that is happening all over the world.

Your school might be closed,  
sports might be canceled,  
and even the grownups around you  
might be a bit **scared**\*.

It seems like the entire world is  
thinking about one thing.....

\*It's ok to feel scared, even if you're a grownup.

**CORONAVIRUS**

So I'm here to tell you what  
**coronavirus** is (and isn't).

**Coronavirus** is a new disease.



**COVID-19** has never existed in the  
entire history of the world.

---

→ Until now.

That means that no one has ever had it.

**COVID-19** is caused by a virus\*.

A virus is a very tiny thing

(so tiny you need a microscope to see it)

that can get inside your body  
and make lots of copies of itself.

This can make you sick.

\*The virus is called SARS-Cov-2, and the disease it causes is called COVID-19,  
but a lot of people just call it all “coronavirus.”

You've definitely had a virus before -  
they cause things like colds and the flu.

**Coronavirus** can cause a fever,  
cough,  
stuffy nose,  
fatigue,  
or a headache.

Some people who get it  
never even notice they're sick,



and other people just have  
a little run-down feeling.

But a few people who get  
**coronavirus** get very sick.

(If they get too sick, they could even die from coronavirus.)

really



Lucky for you,  
kids do not usually get very sick when  
they get **coronavirus** —————→ BUT you can still give it to other people.

You might have heard that  
**coronavirus** is just like the flu.

**IT'S  
NOT!**

Here are some ways that **coronavirus** isn't like the flu

---



IT'S  
**DIFFERENT**

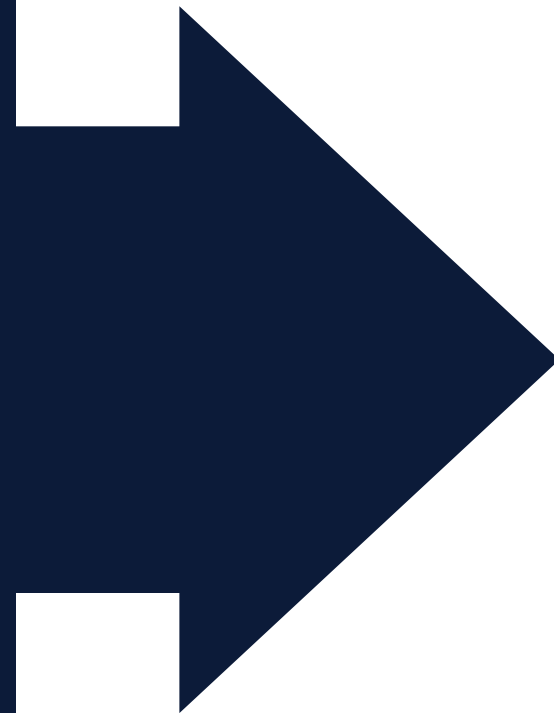
It's not the same  
virus as influenza.  
Doctors aren't exactly  
sure how to treat  
**COVID-19**  
(but they're working on that).

IT'S  
**NEW**

There is no vaccine\*  
(doctors are working on that, too),  
and no one has ever had it before.

\*A vaccine is a medicine that keeps you from getting a virus by giving your body instructions for how to fight it later on. Usually vaccines are given as shots.

IT'S SPREADING  
**FASTER**



**COVID-19** infects  
you quickly and is  
good at getting other  
people sick.



IT'S MORE  
**DANGEROUS**

Compared to flu, people who get **COVID-19** are more likely to get very sick and die of it\*.

\*The people who get very sick are usually older or already sick with another disease.

There's still a lot we don't know about  
**coronavirus** because it's so new.

Scientists are learning new things  
about it LITERALLY every day!

But one thing we know for sure, is how you get it...

**snort**

When someone coughs or sneezes,  
snot and spit flies out of their noses like an atomic bomb of...

# GERMS\*

\* Germs are tiny little particles that can cause you to get sick.  
Viruses are one kind of germs. Bacteria are another kind.

Those germs land on all sorts of things and stick there, sometimes for a few days.

Door handles, tables, tablets, and pencils.

Even sandwiches.





When you touch something that has  
viruses on it, they stick to your hands.

Then you rub your eye,  
and you can get virus in your eye!



Or you touch your sandwich, and put  
the sandwich in your mouth.

Now there is virus in your mouth.

You could even accidentally breathe  
those bits of snot in if you're close to  
someone who sneezes or coughs.

Viruses are happy in mouths and noses, where they can make lots of copies of themselves.

**YES,**

**it is disgusting.**



Scientists call this “droplet transmission\*.”

Droplet transmission is one way viruses get from one person to another. It catches a ride on small drops of spit or snot.

\* We could have just called it snot, but scientists like to use very specific words.

I know this all might seem really scary  
and you might want to panic. —  
/ | \

A lot of grownups might want to panic too,  
and it is a little scary.

It's ok to feel whatever you are feeling.

But here's what **you** can do to help!

Don't pick your

**N** **ose**

(or put your hands  
in your mouth).



Even if your fingers don't look dirty, they could have **viruses** on them!

You should try to keep your hands out of your nose and mouth.

If you insist on picking your nose, even after an actual scientist just told you not to, do it with clean hands.

Which brings me to my next point.....

# WASH YOUR HANDS.\*



Keeping your hands clean with  
soap and water helps a lot!

It's especially important  
to use clean hands to eat.

\* Actually, wash them as often as you can. Use soap and water and wash for 20 seconds, or as long as it takes to sing Baby Shark all the way through. Or pick another song you love to sing!

# COCOON

## for a little while.

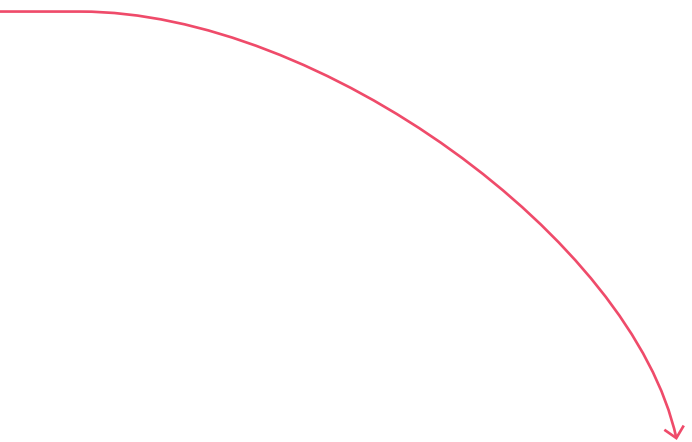
That means for a little while, stick close to home and don't spend time near other people.

It's okay to go outside, but don't do it with groups of other kids.

Scientists call this "social distancing<sup>\*</sup>".

<sup>\*</sup>I told you, scientists love to use big words!






We all have to stay in our cocoons for a little while because **coronavirus** is spreading so fast that scientists can't test everyone for it all at once.

We don't know who has it and who doesn't!

Just in case you already have it  
(and you don't even know),  
we need you to stay away from  
other people who could  
get it from you.



Are you worried that you already have  
it and could give it to your grownups?

It's not your fault if that happens.

It's not your job to figure out who has it.

Scientists are working on that  
as fast as they can.

**It's your job to be a kid.**



And while you're just being a kid you  
can do a lot for everyone else  
by doing simple things like  
washing your hands,  
not picking your nose,  
and cocooning for a while.

—————→ We need to work TOGETHER.

**If we work  
TOGETHER,**

fewer people will get sick and be in danger.



**If we work  
TOGETHER,**

the disease will spread more slowly and scientists will have more time to figure out a fast way to test people for **coronavirus**, the best treatment, and a vaccine.

It will take everyone's help to keep away  
from each other and stop **COVID-19**  
in its tracks.

If everyone helps, we can keep  
ourselves safer and keep the people  
around us safer, too.

# COVID-19 facts:

- The next step in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic is to implement widespread, rapid testing. We need to know who has it in order to prevent further spread of the virus. We do not know how long it will take to get testing capacity up to speed.
- There are actually lots of different coronaviruses out there, and have been for a long time. It's a whole family of viruses. They're called coronaviruses because when you look at them under a microscope, they are shaped like a sun, or a corona. This particular coronavirus is brand new to the world.
- This coronavirus is a genetic cousin to the virus that caused the SARS outbreak in 2003 which affected over 8,000 people before it was contained successfully.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 probably came from an ancestor virus that infected some other animal population. We don't know what kind of animal it came from yet--but some day, we probably will.
- Dogs & cats can get other coronaviruses, but not this one.
- Soap kills viruses by making them explode.

- We do not know if the outbreak will end when the weather warms up, but we suspect that the weather doesn't really matter to this virus much.
- We don't know how many people who get COVID-19 will die from it, but we think it's somewhere between 6 in 1000 and 35 in 1000.

We also don't know how many people will ultimately get COVID-19. But we do know that the slower the pandemic happens, the easier it will be to deal with.

- People from Asia, or with ancestors from Asia, are no more or less likely to get or transmit COVID-19 than anyone else. All kinds of humans can get the virus. Older humans are more likely to have a serious case that requires hospitalization.
- Scientists are already working on a treatment and a vaccine. Scientists are already trying out new treatments, but a vaccine won't be available for a while--at least a year and a half, and maybe much longer.
- Scientists who study epidemics are called epidemiologists. Epidemiologists are one part of a science called public health, the study of how groups of people stay healthy. Maybe you can help prevent the next pandemic when you grow up by studying public health!

## Outro

**N**ow that you're equipped with all this information, what do you do now? Hopefully you start out by just talking to your kiddo. I am sure they'll have questions and certainly some thoughts of their own. Try to listen as much as you talk. Hear them out.

Then, try these questions:

1. What are you worried about right now?
2. What questions do you still have about coronavirus?
3. What creatures do you know of that use a cocoon for protection?
4. What are you most grateful for today?

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