

DESPITE THE CORONAVIRUS

Information for parents



Contact
Sozialpädiatrisches
Zentrum SPZ
Kantonsspital
Winterthur
Tel. 052 266 29 19
kjpp.spz@ksw.ch

*For further information,
please see*
**[www.ksw.ch/klinik/
sozialpaediatrisches-
zentrum-spz/](http://www.ksw.ch/klinik/sozialpaediatrisches-zentrum-spz/)**



All information can be
found online under:

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**KANTONSSPITAL
WINTERTHUR**

Dear parents

In mid-March, everyday life in Switzerland changed fundamentally from one day to another for all of us. Our accustomed structure of everyday life with school, work and hobbies has suddenly disappeared, and the Federal Council's guidelines severely restrict social contacts. Adapting to this changed everyday life is a great challenge for all of us.

As parents, you suddenly have to take on many additional tasks and provide your children with additional security during this time, which is associated with many uncertainties for everyone. This can become a great challenge, sometimes even so much that you feel overwhelmed.

You are the most important role model for your child. It's feelings are based on your behavior and how you deal with the current situation. Use the time you have gained involuntarily to think about what is really important to you, your child and your family. In order to support you in coping with this situation, we will gladly provide you with various tips, ideas and further addresses.

Sozialpädiatrisches Zentrum SPZ

Kantonsspital Winterthur

Age-appropriate information about the coronavirus

Meanwhile, most children and young people know exactly how to wash their hands and that you need to keep your distance from others. However, many people know little about the corona virus and often have wrong ideas. Accordingly, they are afraid, sometimes they react in panic. Let your child ask questions, but do not force him or her to do so. During the conversation, take up your child's existing knowledge and correct possible false information at the same time. Your child should know that we are not handing over the power to the virus, because we know how to protect ourselves. You can be honest if there is something you do not know. Expand your knowledge together with child-oriented films and information on the Internet. The short film «The corona virus simply explained to children» by the City of Vienna offers a good basis, the picture book «Hitchhiking through the CORONA-Galaxy» can also be found on the internet.

Existential fears

Quite a few parents have real fears of losing their jobs or suffering drastic wage cuts due to the economic consequences of the pandemic. They are desperate, experience sleepless nights and brood for hours. These fears can also be transferred to your child. Children quickly become aware of what and how we are concerned - and experience suffering in the process, which we cannot spare them. It is therefore important to inform them appropriately and according to their age. Nevertheless, we should not expect too much from them, but rather talk to familiar adults and seek advice at a suitable place.

Protect yourself and your child from too much information. It is quite sufficient to listen to or watch the news 1-2 times a day and to keep up to date with the latest information and the course of this pandemic.

Children react differently - this is normal

Children and young people react differently to this extraordinary situation, just as we adults do. While some children suddenly become particularly anxious and affectionate, others react with increased withdrawal. Still other children are suddenly much more restless than usual and become angry more quickly. Some complain more often about stomach or headaches. These are basically «normal» reactions to an unusual situation.

During difficult times, children especially need a lot of security, attention and affection from their parents. Listen to your child when he or she talks about their worries and fears. Relaxation and play times, in which fun and games are the main focus, also help to regulate stress better.

Dealing with conflict and violence

In the current situation many of us experience more stress. This can increase tension and conflict. At the same time, both as a family and as a couple, we are not used to spending so much time together in a confined space. It is therefore especially important during this time to discuss the rules of living together and to give each other space. Therefore, you should plan regular exercise outdoors in nature. This helps to clear your head and get rid of accumulated energy. Define retreat times and spaces. Be generous to others and yourself. Discuss regularly with the children and exchange what has proven itself as a good or bad agreement and what solutions need to be sought.

Experience shows that in times of crisis domestic violence is more frequent. It is better to leave the home for a short walk before a dispute escalates. Seek help at an early stage if you are affected by domestic violence or are exercising it. Many counselling centers have now expanded their availability and the range of advice available by telephone or online.

Filling stations for the heroes of the Corona crisis.

Are you aware that you are doing extraordinary things these weeks? Do you pat yourself on the back from time to time and do you also reward yourself for your performance from time to time? Your health is one of the basic prerequisites for your children and young people to survive these weeks well. Take care of yourself. Also keep an eye on your well-being. Take breaks to breathe deeply.

References and further addresses:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Mental health in times of Corona

At <https://dureschnufe.ch> you can find addresses of various counselling centers and further tips on how to maintain mental health during the corona crisis.

Counselling services for parents, couples, children and young people

Pediatricians and family doctors*, child and youth welfare services, school social work, the school psychological service, as well as the psychological and psychiatric practices for children, adolescents and adults can be reached. Some also offer home office consultations on a telephone or virtual basis (video-supported).

- The paarlife online training of the University of Zurich offers free training and coaching.
- The foundation «Institut Kinderseele Schweiz» offers informative short films, many links and also an anonymous online counselling service for children and young people from burdened families: <https://www.kinderseele.ch>
- The Pro Mente Sana Foundation advises mentally stressed persons and their relatives by telephone and online: <https://www.promentesana.ch/de/beratung.html>
- At www.projuventute.ch or by telephone at «147» you can get advice for children, young people and parents.

Help with experienced domestic and sexual violence

- www.okeywinterthur.ch
- <https://www.frauenhaus-winterthur.ch>
- <https://www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch/de>

Relief offers

The City of Winterthur coordinates offers of neighbourhood assistance: <https://stadt.winterthur.ch/themen/leben-in-winterthur/sicherheit/bevoelkerungsschutz/coronavirus/nachbarschaftshilfe>

The SRC and the Swiss Charitable Society (SGG) also offer a support platform for neighbourhood assistance and errands: <https://www.fiveup.org/home>

KANTONSSPITAL

WINTERTHUR

Brauerstrasse 15
Postfach
8401 Winterthur
Tel. 052 266 21 21
info@ksw.ch
www.ksw.ch

With the support of:



Stadt Winterthur
Departement Soziales



Imprint

Idea and concept:

Sozialpädiatrisches Zentrum SPZ, Kantonsspital Winterthur

Implementation and editing:

Christina Kohli | lic. phil. Psychologin, Leiterin Sprechstunde Psychotraumatologie, SPZ

Maria Sorgo | MSc Psychologin

Barbara Hew | lic. phil. Psychologin

Kurt Albermann | Dr. med., Chefarzt SPZ, Facharzt Kinder- und Jugendmedizin,

Facharzt Kinder- und Jugendpsychiatrie und -psychotherapie

Contact

Sozialpädiatrisches Zentrum SPZ
Kantonsspital Winterthur

Secretariat

Brauerstrasse 15
Postfach
8401 Winterthur
Tel: 052 266 29 19
kjpp.spz@ksw.ch

