

# The Big Sickness



**Once in a very, very long time, something happens that feels really strange.**

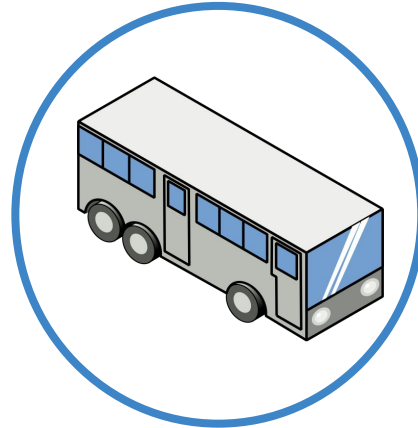
**We have to change what we do every day – who we play with, what we touch, and where we go.**

**It is a Big  
Sickness.**

**You know that when you have the sniffles or your tummy hurts, you need to stay home so you can feel better and so other people don't get sick.**

**When the Big Sickness comes, it is like everybody in the whole world having the sniffles or a hurting tummy at the same time, except it feels worse.**

**This might mean that firefighters are too sick to drive fire trucks or doctors are too sick to help everyone feel better or bus drivers are too sick to take people where they need to go.**



**We don't want this to happen.**



**We want to be safe and healthy, and we want to keep our friends and neighbors safe and healthy, so the whole world does not get sick at the same time.**

Usually when we want to help people, we try to be near them. We bring them food and give them hugs.



But the Big Sickness is different. Doctors and scientists say that to keep everyone safe and healthy, we have to stay **away** from other people, for just a little while, so we don't share germs. We stay away because we might be sick or they might be sick, and we don't want to get each other sick.



**No one did anything wrong if they are sick. They are not bad or scary, just like you are not bad or scary if you get sick. This is just a different kind of sick, with**

**Very. Bad. Germs.**



**If someone is  
sick, we hope  
they get better  
very, very soon.  
Most people  
will.**



**What can we do  
while the Big  
Sickness is here?**

**Some things will be exactly the same.**

**Who lives in your house or apartment? These are the people you can touch and be close to during the Big Sickness.**

**You can watch movies and play with your toys and maybe even go for walks, if a grown-up says it's ok. You can color and use stickers and dress up like a princess or a superhero. You can eat yummy food and maybe even have dessert sometimes. You can listen to music and dance and sing songs.**

**You can play with your pet, if you have one.**

**Some things need to be different for just a little while.**

**You won't be able to go a lot of places. School is closed. You can't play on big playgrounds. If you usually go to a synagogue, church, mosque, or temple, a grown-up will tell you if you can still do that. But probably not right now. If a grown-up you live with needs to go to the grocery store, you might need to stay home or in the car or outside.**

**You won't be able to see your teachers or play with your friends.**



**What about your friend  
who lives across the  
street or down the  
hall?**

**You can wave and talk  
and sing, but you  
cannot get close to  
them. You must stand  
at least as far apart as  
the length of one car.**





**When you are not in your house or apartment, you need to try not to touch things – like elevator buttons or shopping carts. And you need to try to keep your hands out of your mouth and nose. Just like always, it is important that you wash your hands a lot so you **don't share germs**. You can count to 20 or sing “Happy Birthday” or another song you like two times to make sure you are washing for a long enough time.**

**The grown-ups you live with might need to go to work sometimes or they might need to go somewhere to help take care of someone, like delivering food. They might be home with you most of the time, or they might not.**

**Grown-ups will decide how to make sure everyone is safe.**





**You might be able to talk with family and friends on a grown-up's phone, tablet, or laptop.**

**Maybe you want to put your hand over your heart or blow a kiss to show you **love** them even though you cannot hug them right now.**



**Ask a grown-up about some of the rules for your family during the Big Sickness and about some of the fun things you will be able to do, too. If you are sad, afraid, or frustrated, tell a grown-up. It's ok if you don't like these new rules, but you still have to follow them.**

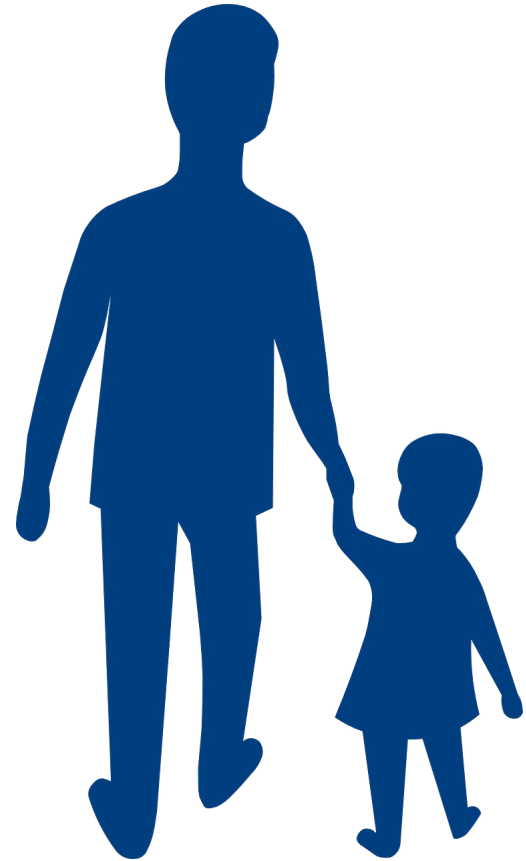
**Do you like to be a helper? Doctors and scientists say that we can be the best helpers by staying home and away from other people, even though it is hard.**

**Kids can do hard things!**

**Even the grown-ups have never seen a Big Sickness like this before in their whole lives. They will do the best they can, but they also might get sad, afraid, or frustrated sometimes.**

**You can remind them that they are being helpers, too.**

**Maybe they would like to go for a walk or talk to a friend or give you a hug (it's ok since you live in the same house).**



**Remember, the Big Sickness is just for a little while,  
not for always.**

**We don't know how long.**

**It might be a lot of days.**



**But soon, the Big Sickness will become a little sickness, and we will not be worried any more about the whole world being sick at the same time.**



**You will be able to go back to school and see your friends, play on playgrounds, and hug anyone you want to (as long as they want to be hugged).**

**Until then, listen to grown-ups so  
you can stay safe and healthy and  
we can all take care of each other.**

**You can do it!**

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