COPING WITH COVID-19

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Oh, Dr. Breeze, I'm ok, but I miss seeing my friends at school! I miss my gymnastics practice!

I even miss coming into your office!

Jazzy, how are you today? Any issues with your asthma?
I miss seeing you too, but I'm glad we still have the option of checking in on a video call!

Doctors call this "telemedicine" — meeting with patients on computers or smart phones instead of face to face.
Telemedicine has been around for quite a while. Right now, more people are using telemedicine for doctor visits because people are social distancing during this coronavirus epidemic.
I keep hearing people say "coronavirus" and "COVID-19."

Are they both the same thing?
Great question, Jazzy! So, you can hear that "coronavirus" has the word "virus" in it, right?

A virus is something very tiny called a "microbe." Bacteria and fungi are also microbes.

Some microbes cause disease, and we usually call those microbes "germs."
Viruses exist to do one thing: they get into cells and turn the cells into virus copy machines! That damages the cells and can cause people or other living things to get sick.
Coronavirus is the name for a group of viruses that are similar. A new kind of coronavirus recently appeared and started causing a lot of people to get sick.

COVID-19 is the name for the disease caused by this new coronavirus. "CO" stands for corona, "VI" for virus, and "D" for disease. "19" stands for when the disease was first identified — in November, 2019.

I'll show you a website that tells you more!
Even though we have viruses around all the time, like the ones that cause colds and flu, this NEW KIND of coronavirus spreads faster and causes people to get sicker.

So, coronavirus is a kind of VIRUS, and COVID-19 is the DISEASE it causes?

Exactly!
The news on TV keeps saying that getting sick with COVID-19 is more serious for people who already have certain health problems.

COVID-19 can be a serious illness . . .

That’s me, right? With my asthma? I’m kinda worried.
I understand that you’re worried! We are all a bit worried, but we can do things to reduce our chances of getting sick.

We’re doing one of them now! Social distancing!
I know we are all supposed to do “social distancing.” But if I don’t feel sick at all, I don’t get why I have to stay away from people.
Here's why social distancing is important...

Some viruses spread mostly through tiny drops. These drops get into the air when a person with the virus in their body coughs, sneezes, or even just talks!
Viruses are actually much too small to see!

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is one that spreads through droplets in the air. When the droplets come out of another person, they can go right into your mouth or nose!
That's super gross!

Sounds gross, I agree! That's why when people spend time close together, they pass the coronavirus around.

And people who don't feel sick at all can still have the virus in their body and spread it.
But Mom and I still have to go out and get groceries and pick up my asthma meds and stuff. Should I be scared to go outside?

No, you don’t have to be scared to go outside! But you need to do a few things to keep your chance of getting COVID-19 as low as possible.
We just talked about social distancing, right? Even when you're excited to see a friend walking outside or at the store, you need to keep at least six feet away.

The droplets with virus in them don't usually spread further than that.
Now, you’ve seen doctors and nurses wear face masks, right?

Right. They look kinda silly!
Well, you get to look silly right along with us medical folks now, because you need to wear one too. When you’re going indoors to a place where more people are, like a grocery store, wear a cloth face mask.

Remember those tiny droplets we talked about? The mask helps keep them from escaping your mouth and nose and spreading to other people.

IF YOU DON’T HAVE A CLOTH FACE MASK, YOU CAN MAKE ONE OUT OF AN OLD T-SHIRT AND RUBBER BANDS.
The mask also helps keep you from touching your face. Some of the droplets that come out of people land on surfaces, like shopping carts. If you touch those things and then touch your face, you can bring the virus right into your body.

Viruses are actually much too small to see!
I guess that’s why Mom keeps giving me hand sanitizer when we’re out. And she tells me to wash my hands as soon as we come back in the house.

Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the number one way to prevent disease from any kind of virus or bacteria!

Some people sing a song to mark the time!

Visit washyourlyrics.com to create a hand washing poster with song lyrics you choose!
Rubbing with the soap lifts bacteria and viruses off your skin, and the water rinses them away.

Wash your hands even when you don't leave home, because you are always touching things that other people have touched.

When you're away from home, using hand sanitizer is a good substitute.
All this stuff is kind of annoying to do! I wish we could just be back to normal.

This stuff IS kind of annoying! We all miss our regular lives. But the things we are doing protect ourselves AND other people.

We’re still not sure people with asthma get sicker if they get COVID-19, but let’s be extra careful just in case!
Things WILL gradually become more normal. You’ll be able to get out and go more places. But don’t rush ahead and forget to do the things that will help keep you healthy!

So, as long as doctors advise it, continue to...

1. PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING.

2. WEAR MASKS WHEN AROUND MORE PEOPLE AT PLACES LIKE STORES.
Eventually, we'll have a vaccine to protect us from COVID-19. Then we won't have to stay away from others or wear masks. But developing a new vaccine takes a while.

Once a vaccine is available, the more people that get the vaccine, the more protected we'll all be.

Keep washing your hands often with soap and water... even after this coronavirus epidemic!

Clean hands help protect you from all germs -- not just coronavirus!
OK, I'll do it! And I'll remind my pal Vito about all this. He's been super restless at home and misses hanging out with me and the rest of our friends.

He keeps saying, "I'm not sick, so what's the problem?" I'll text him when we're done with this call.
Sounds good, Jazzy! Keep in mind that your usual allergy and asthma symptoms might cause you to cough or sneeze a bit, but COVID-19 symptoms are different.
We're learning more about COVID-19 symptoms all the time. People react to the virus in different ways. The CDC website (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) always has the latest symptom information, but here are some common ones:

- extremely tired
- hurts to breathe
- have a fever
I'll definitely call if I feel sick like that. But I'll keep doing all the things you told me to stay healthy, so hopefully that won't happen.

If you have these symptoms or anything else is bothering you, just check with me. You might need to be tested for the coronavirus.

Testing is the best way to know if you have the coronavirus.
Stay well, Dr. Breeze!

You stay well too, Jazzy! Bye!

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