

Charlie learns about coronavirus





Hi. I'm Charlie.

Things have been sort of weird at my house. School is closed, and it's not even summer! And my parents aren't going to their jobs. Dad said it's because of coronavirus.

I had a bunch of questions.



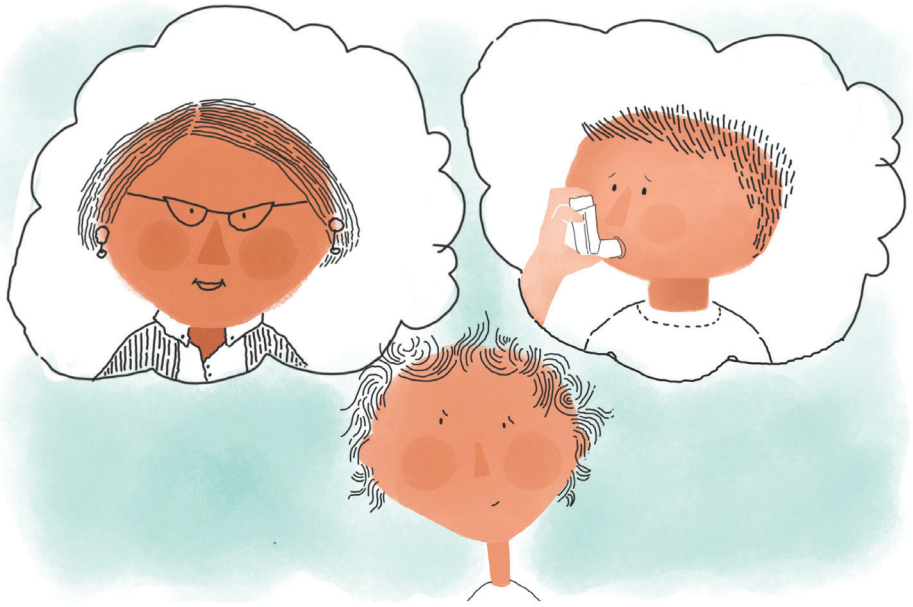
My dad said "Charlie, you ask very good questions. I just don't know all the answers! I think your Aunt Chris can help."

My aunt is a scientist. She knows a lot about germs. She lives in the same building we do. But my dad told me I had to call her on the phone.



Aunt Chris was happy I called her. She told me that even though we live close, we have to stay apart right now. That's because of a type of germ called a virus. People call it the coronavirus, or COVID-19.

Aunt Chris said that when people get close to each other, it's easy to share germs. That's why we have to talk on the phone. And that's why my school is closed.



I learned that most people who get the virus feel like they have a cold or the flu. Those people can stay home and rest to get better. And usually, kids don't get too sick!

But this virus can make **SOME** people very sick. Like my grandma, because she's older. And my friend Arthur, because he has asthma. They could get so sick that they have to go to the hospital!

That made me feel worried.

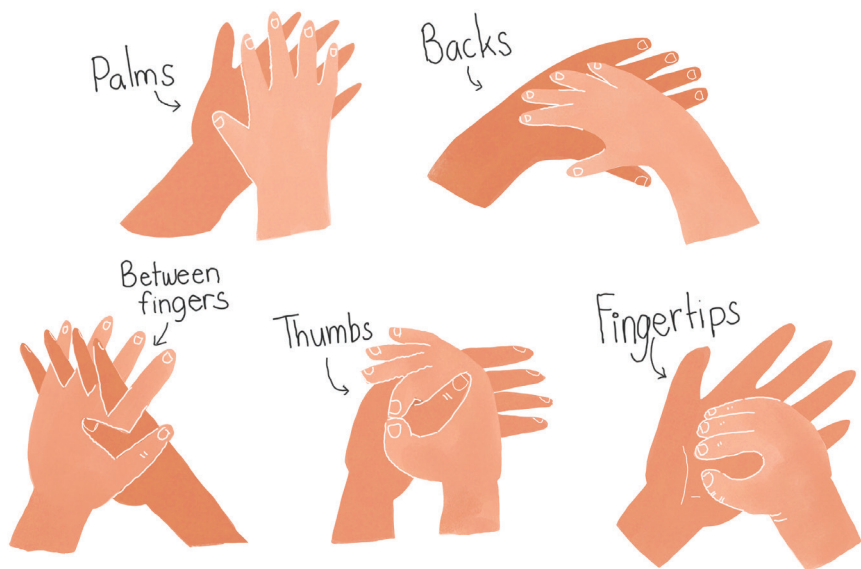


But my aunt told me not to worry. She said that lots of doctors and other adults are working hard to keep everybody safe and healthy. And that made me feel better.

She told me that kids can help, too!

"Charlie," she said, "your job is to be a germ-buster."

Here's how I bust germs.



I wash my hands with lots of bubbles. I scrub both sides, between my fingers, and under my nails. And I sing “Happy Birthday” twice while I do it. That’s how I know I’m scrubbing long enough to kill germs.



If I cough or sneeze, I catch it in my elbow, like this! That stops germs from flying into the air, and it keeps them off my hands, too.



I try really hard not to touch my face, because germs can get into my body through my eyes, nose, and mouth. But it's not an easy thing to remember!

Sometimes I put on my bug mask for a little while to help remind me. It stops my hands if I try to scratch my nose or rub my eyes. And it makes my parents laugh when they see me.



I follow directions from my parents about not getting close to other people. For now, I don't hug our neighbors, the Greens. But I still say hi and wave.



I don't go to art classes right now or play with friends at the park. But I can still have fun.

I make art at home. And today, I had a video dance party with Arthur!

It's not how my normal day goes, but that's okay. I know these changes aren't forever. And right now, they are helping keep me and the people I love healthy and safe.



Now that you know what Charlie does to be a germ-buster, what kinds of things can you do? Do you have ideas about how to keep your hands away from your face? What kinds of fun things can you do at home?



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