

A Kids'
Guide to the
Coronavirus
a.k.a. the
Crown Bug

BY

words and pictures
Sharon Mentyka



For anyone
who feels afraid.

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Printed and bound in the U.S.A
Spanish and Chinese translations by translated.com
Typeset in Lemonberry Sans, a hand lettered font
designed by Sabrina Schleiger

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ISBN: 978-0-9863293-2-6

This project was supported, in part,
by a grant from 4Culture/King County Lodging Tax,
Cultural Relief Creative Response Program

Digital PDF copies of this Kids' Guide to the Coronavirus
are available (for free!) in English, Spanish, and Chinese.
Printed copies are \$5.00 to cover shipping and handling.

Email requests to
sharon@sharonmentyka.com



Every now and then,
you find yourself in a bad situation.
It happens to everyone.

But sometimes . . . something so big,
something so rare happens
that even the grown-ups
in your life seem worried.

Then what do you do?

You can't control the world.
But you can control YOU.

You can be smart.
You can learn the facts.
You can use common sense.
You can take responsibility for how you act
or face the consequences.

You know what
consequences are, right?
Yeah, that.

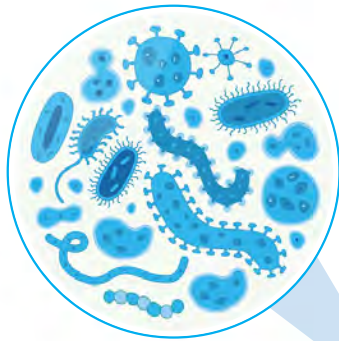
This zine
is here to help.
Read on!





One cold, rainy, unremarkable day in January 2020, something began that would soon rattle the whole world.

It started small . . . on a microscopic level.



Microscopic means something **so tiny** it's only visible with a special magnifying lens.



A virus particle hitched a ride with a traveler who was returning home to Seattle, WA after visiting family in China.

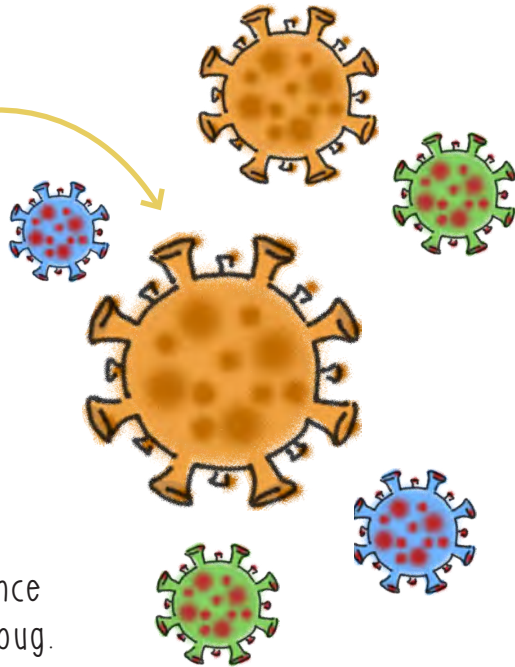


Haha!
You can't see me!

The invisible wanderer was a coronavirus, a member of the same virus family that causes the common cold.

"Corona" means "crown" in Latin.

Do these spiky things look like crowns to you?



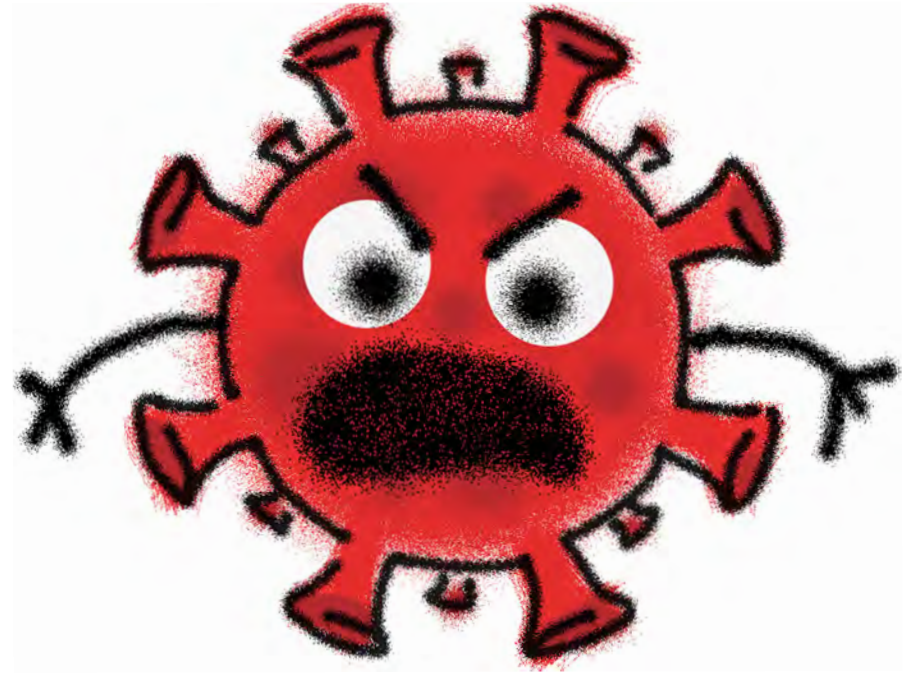
But there was an important difference about this crown bug. **IT WAS NEW.**

So new that no one had ever become sick from it before, so our bodies had no protection.

A virus can't live on its own. It needs the cells in our bodies to make more copies of itself.

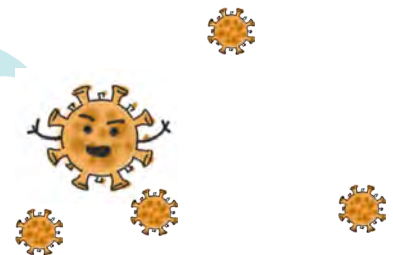
WHAT!?

Now you might imagine the crown bug as a **mean, evil monster.**



But really, it's just a teeny-weeny germ, trying (like everything else on our planet) to stay alive.

Hey, I'm just tryin' to survive!



Once it got going,
the crown bug traveled *fast!*

Soon, people all over the world
were getting sick.

Some, especially children,
just felt tired and achy.
But others became really ill.
Many people died.

The crown bug causes a disease
called Covid-19, named for the year
it was identified.



In hospitals, the nurses and doctors,
housekeepers and janitors,
ambulance drivers, and cooks
worked and worked and WORKED.
They worked until they were exhausted.

They were a brave bunch.
In those first few crazy months,
they protected us all.

Schools, restaurants,
and many businesses
closed.

Everyone was told
to stay home.



At first, it might've felt
new and fun.



But then—maybe your house
began to feel a little small...

even smaller...



really, really small.



And staying
home got
boring.

But maybe your troubles were **bigger**
than just being bored.

Maybe someone you loved got sick
or lost their job,
and the bills needed paying,
or the car needed fixing,
or there was no milk or eggs
in the fridge.

Maybe you felt
so angry you wanted
to punch someone.
(Don't)



Maybe you felt
really, really sad.
(It's okay to be sad)

But without a cure or vaccine for the crown bug, it's too soon to go back to life the way it used to be.

Think of it like a disease marathon!

Now it's up to us to play it safe.

HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW:

Just like colds and the flu, the crown bug spreads the same way—jumping from one person to another, kind of like a game of tag.

Vaccines, made with dead virus cells, help our bodies recognize and destroy the living virus without causing the disease.



Sneeze or cough, scream or shout and little droplets of virus can spread everywhere!

Ewww!

Breathe in those particles, and they might go straight up your nose and into your lungs.





Even worse, **one** out of every three people who catch the crown bug never have any symptoms at all—no fever, no coughing, no sore throat.

Nothing! That means, without knowing it, we can still pass it on to other people. **Wow.**

I bet by now you're thinking—
I don't want to make my Grandma sick!

Is there anything I can do
to keep this crown bug away from me?

Why, **YES**, there is!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

WASH YOUR HANDS!

I don't mean a quick swipe.
I mean 20 seconds of scrubbing with soap.

Wash them before you eat,
before you touch your face—
(we touch our faces about 16 times an hour...Ugh!)
Wash them after you go to the grocery store,
after you ride your bike, walk the dog,
bring in the mail...you get the idea.

Good news!

Hot or cold water
will do just fine.



WEAR A MASK!

It might look unfriendly
and feel weird at first,
but wearing a mask is the

most loving thing
you can do.

If everyone wears a mask,
we all protect each other.

Plus, you get to look
like your favorite animal!



WATCH YOUR DISTANCE!

Scientists have learned that
social distancing—staying 6 feet apart
and away from big crowds—
makes it harder for the crown bug
to jump from one person to the next.

Think of it as a way to practice
your math!

But maybe we should call it
“physical distancing” instead?

So now that you know what you CAN do,
here are two things to REMEMBER:

1) DON'T WORRY

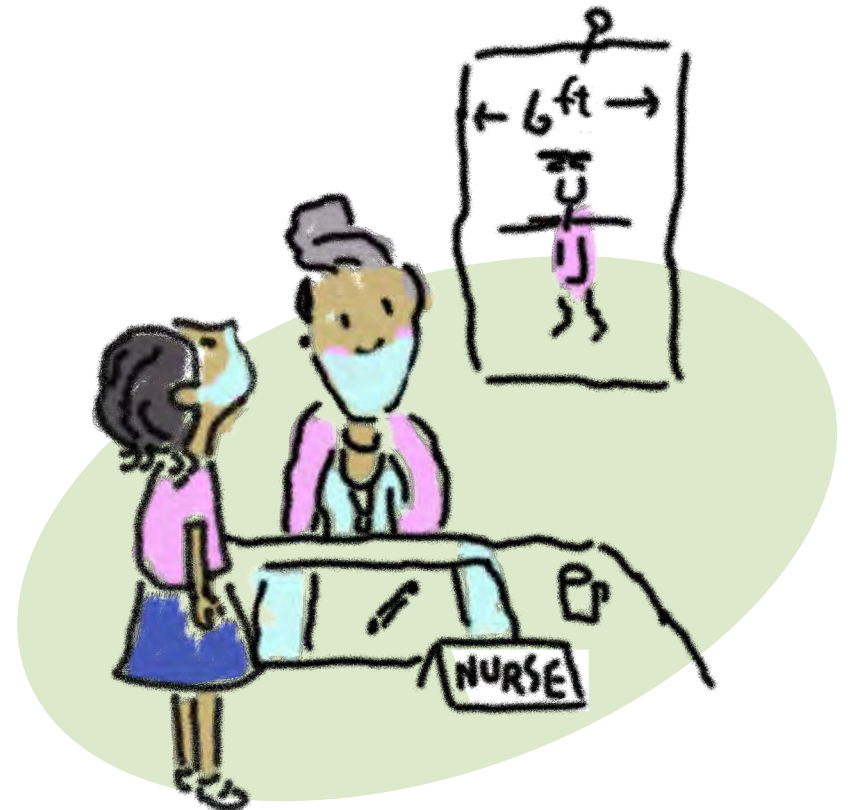


I know.

Sometimes when you try not to worry
about something, it keeps popping
back into your head...
and you think about it and
think about it and THINK about it
until your brain feels like
it's going to explode!

Hundreds and thousands
of scientists and doctors are working
around the clock to find a vaccine
that will work against the crown bug.

Wash your hands, wear a mask,
stay away from big crowds,
and let the grown-ups
handle the rest.



2) IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT

ANYONE can get sick with Covid-19.

THIS ONE IS IMPORTANT!

It doesn't matter what color your skin is,
what language you speak at home,
or what country your parents
were born in.

The crown bug doesn't care.

If anyone tells you otherwise,
DON'T listen to them.



Soon, our struggles with the crown bug
will be just a bad memory.

But first, we have to get through
this together. So let's do it!

Let's be kind to each other, let's laugh, learn, grow,
and hold our breath together.

If we do, something **glorious** may happen!

And we might find that by staying apart,
we all grow closer together.

Oh, and **MAYBE** you're a kid who finds all
this talk of viruses and science fascinating . . .



Maybe it will be **YOU** who finds a cure
or vaccine for another nasty
little bug someday.

(Although I'd suggest a few more years
of schooling first.)

Then, you just might earn yourself
a real crown!

In the meantime,
mask up!

Oh, and did
I mention?

You **REALLY**
should go wash
your hands
now.



THANK YOU!

A big thank you to 4Culture of King County, Washington, for providing funding and support for this project through their Cultural Relief Creative Response Program.

Special thanks to Mark Phillips and Jeffrey Schwartz, both of the University of Washington, Seattle, for their helpful technical guidance.

For manuscript review, suggestions, and support, many thanks to Tamar Shapiro, Gabriela Denise Frank, Carol Mentyka, Denise Weir, Lena Mentyka, Scott Callander, Stephen Schlott, Nancy Megan Corwin, Barbara Young, and especially all my kid readers.

RESOURCES:

Seattle & King County COVID-19 Resources
www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/covid-19.aspx

City of Seattle: COVID-19 Community Resources
www.seattle.gov/mayor/covid-19

United Way of King County, WA: Coronavirus Resources
www.uwkc.org/need-help/covid-19-resources/

Solid Ground: COVID-19 information & resources for Seattle, King County & Washington State
www.solid-ground.org/get-help/coronavirus-resources/

The Arc of King County: Coronavirus Resources
www.arcofkingcounty.org/resource-guide/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19.html

Sharon Mentyka

was once a child herself,
a long time ago. Now she writes stories
for children and sometimes draws
the pictures, too.

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