



#StayAtHome

ebook for kids

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About the Author

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The Story



A day came when Hanna found out that all the kids have to stay at home. Hanna will not go to kindergarten and her brother Tom will not go to school.



The man on TV was using words that were hard to understand:

virus

epidemic

quarantine

Hanna couldn't understand what was going on.

And, on top of that, mom seemed very worried. Maybe even scared!



Hanna wanted **SOMETHING**... But she did not know what exactly.

She wanted to visit her best friend. But mom said

No.

She wanted to go to the playground.

But mom said

No.

She wanted to go for soda and cake to the coffee shop

But mom said

No.

She wanted to visit her grandma... But this was

forbidden, too.

Mom was talking a lot and hugging Hanna
a lot, too but, despite her
efforts, Hanna felt sad
Alone. And angry.

She was
not allowed
to do the things she liked.



And at that very moment, when Hanna felt completely powerless, tears ran down her cheeks and her little hands clenched into fists, mom sat down with Hanna. She did not say anything. She just sat quietly by Hanna's side... And waited.

And Hanna cried.

When Hanna felt ready she looked up at her mom. Mom opened up her arms to hug Hanna.

They just sat there together on the floor and cuddled.



When Hanna felt a little more secure and at peace, she asked:

- Why do I have to stay home now?
- Do you remember what it is like when you are sick? - mom replied with a question.

Hanna nodded her head. She remembered what it was like when her throat and head hurt last time she was sick.

- When one is sick one must stay at home - the mother continued.
- But I am healthy now.

Mom smiled.

- Yes honey, you are healthy but sometimes everyone gets sick. It's normal. And **when a lot of people get sick altogether at the same time** and they get the same sickness. That is called an

epidemic.

- An epidemic. - Hanna replied.

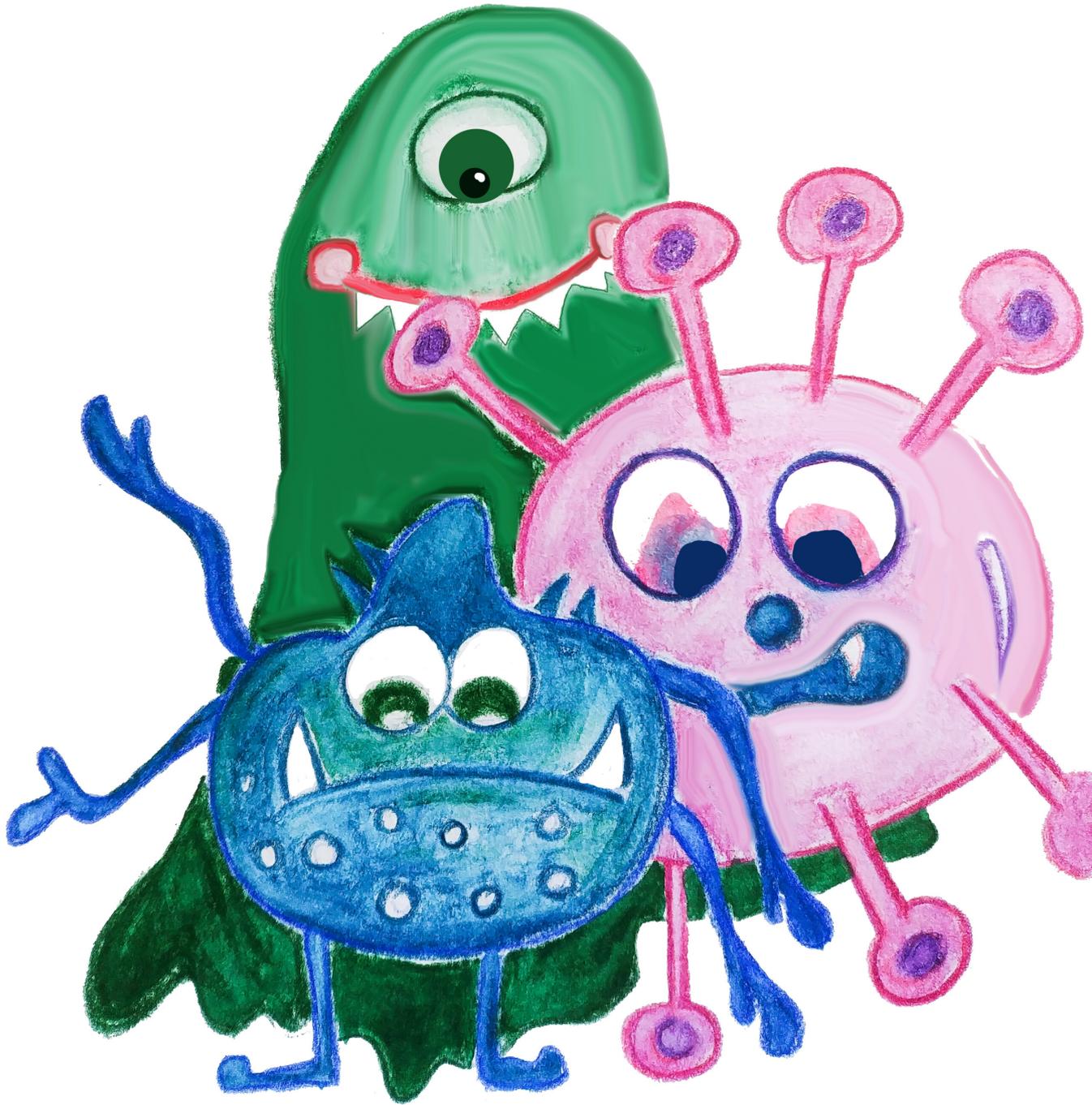
- Yes, an epidemic. And do you know how sickness moves from one person to another?

Hanna shook her head.

- Some sicknesses are caused by *viruses*.

A virus is a teeny, tiny germ. You cannot see it, it is so small.

- If you can't see it, then how do you know it is there?
- Scientists have microscopes - it's a piece of equipment that works similarly to grandma's glasses - when you look through a microscope, the things you look at seem a lot bigger. This is how scientists manage to see different viruses.



- Mhmmmm... - Hanna was all ears.

A person who has a virus can (unwillingly of course, for example when sneezing), transfer this virus to the next person and this person to another person... This way more and more people get sick.

But I am healthy and I don't have a virus! - said Hanna very confidently.

- Some people handle viruses very well. Their body is young, strong and healthy, so once they get the virus, they might not even notice that they have it. But although they do not feel like they have the virus, they still have it. And when they go to see their friend, to a coffee place or to visit their grandma, they may transfer this virus to other people. And that is why, when we have an epidemic, people stay at home even when they are or they feel healthy. Staying at home at the time of an epidemic is called

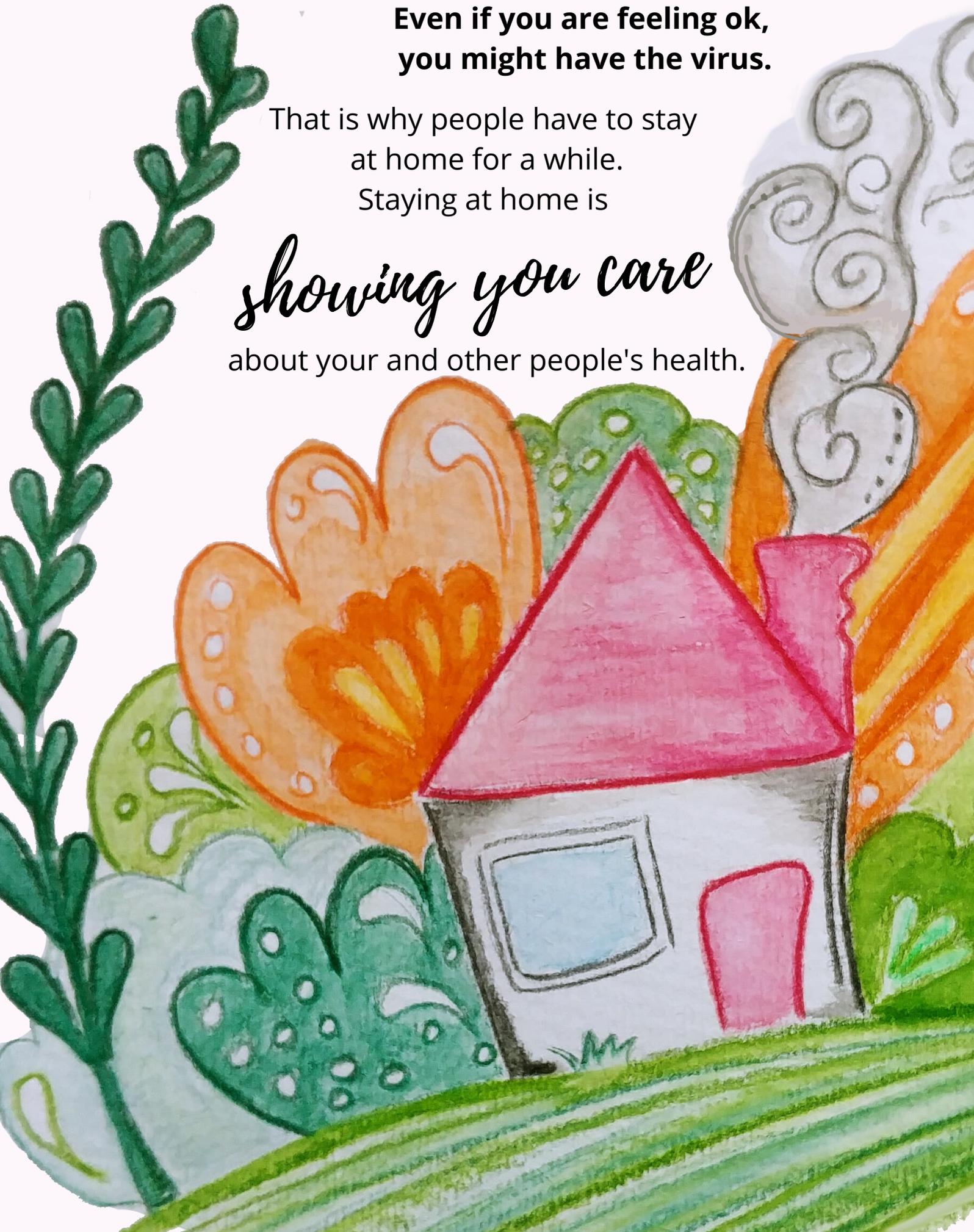


quarantine.

**Now Hanna understood more.
There is a sickness that is caused by a virus.
Even if you are feeling ok,
you might have the virus.**

That is why people have to stay
at home for a while.
Staying at home is

showing you care
about your and other people's health.



- Mom, but what are we going to do during this time?

- asked Hanna.

- Let's make

a list of nice and interesting things

we can do at home, what do you say?

They both smiled and started making a list.



good to know

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM VIRUSES

Wash your hands often, with warm water and soap - this kills most viruses. Sing the chorus of your favourite song twice during that time - this will help you make sure that you have washed your hands well enough.

During an epidemic, make sure you do not spend time with people who are sick unless you look after them.

During the epidemic, when you are in a shop, on a bus or in a different place where there's a lot of people, **make sure you keep your hands in your pockets and you do not touch your face.**

Experiments

Children may find it hard to understand the way viruses spread as well as why washing your hands is so important. This is because they cannot see or experience viruses.

Try to run two experiments with your child in order to show them how viruses spread and how using soap may be beneficial to our health.

Experiment 1

soap vs. viruses

What you need: black ground pepper, a plate filled with water and a basin with liquid soap.

Put minced pepper on the plate filled with water in such a way that the pepper is visible on the water's surface. Ask your child to dip their finger in the water.

Pepper will stick to the finger. Now, ask your child to dip the second finger in the soap and in the water afterwards. What happens?

Pepper does not stick to the soaped finger!

Tell your child that this is how viruses work, they do not like soap, that's why when kids wash their hands with water and soap, viruses stay away.

Experiment 2

how viruses spread

You will need: glitter or flour, dark material or a blanket, books or paper and crayons, a timer.

Caution: it will get a little bit messy during this experiment so please make sure your child has appropriate clothing.

Spread some flour or glitter on your child's hands. Ask them to sit on the blanket for one minute, read a book, or draw something, set the timer. After one minute, help them wash their hands and go have a look together where the glitter or flour is visible. You can use a flashlight or a magnifying glass.

Explain to your child that viruses are like flour or glitter - they stay on your hands and move from one point to another.

Task for you

a list of nice and interesting things

With your child, create a list of pleasant and interesting things you can do at home.

Advice for parents

As adults, we understand the world around us and the decision to stay at home is ours to make. It is our conscious choice. This means that we have a certain feeling of power regarding our decision, the current situation and its consequences. Our kids don't.

They don't always understand what is going on. They need us to explain the situation and provide support. We should adjust the conversation to their perceptual capacity.

Small children who are forced to stay at home for their own good may experience strong feelings and emotions during this time. Tension and stress may become more intense when parents experience them, too.

Children may feel anger, unwillingness, fear, grief or powerlessness. A child has the right to feel and express these emotions. It is worth letting these emotions go, so that they do not cumulate in the child's body and nervous system.

Sometimes, a child who is experiencing strong emotions, may wish to be left alone and refuses to cuddle. It is perfectly normal. They may express their emotions by crying, screaming, stomping their feet, hitting others or nervous laughter (or the so-called "being silly"), etc.

If you want to support your child in this hard time, allow them to experience and express their feelings. Don't ask your child to be quiet, do not tell them that they cannot act, or it is wrong to act, in a certain way.

Instead try telling them:

- I can see this is hard for you
- You feel angry, don't you?
- What you are feeling right now is sadness
- When you are sitting like this, on the edge of your bed, I think you are scared
- What you are feeling right now is natural everybody experiences such emotions sometimes
- You would like things to be different. I understand that.
- You don't like the fact that we have to stay home now, I can hear that.

When saying this, try to stay lower, making sure your face is on the height of your child's face. Also, try to stay calm (if possible).

It is very important for you to understand and feel that it is really ok for your child to experience these emotions. They are a natural part of life and we all have a right to feel those emotions.

Such approach will show that you are a caring adult who is willing to accept their child with all of their feelings and emotions. It is very important for your relation and the child's wellbeing; their emotional, cognitive and social development.

Another important issue is time and frequency. Emotions come and go, but once they go, they do not leave forever. The fact that you have discussed a certain situation and emotion with your child does not mean that the emotion will not reappear. The next time it happens, your child will again need you to be close when they experience strong emotions.

Please remember that the moment when the child is showing strong emotions is not a good time for explanations. Deep feelings of fear, anger, grief or sadness make it very hard to concentrate. Thus, in the hardest moments, when the emotions are the strongest, instead of giving advice or trying to explain, allow your child to experience those emotions, offer your support, hug them, stroke them, be there for them, name their emotions for them. Only when the emotions quiet down you can try to explain and engage in a discussion.

It is also worth knowing that emotions, just like viruses, are very contagious. Our brains are wired in such a way that we tend to take on other people's emotions, like anger or fear, so when the child gets angry, the parent may quickly start experiencing anger, too.

Luckily, we can use this process the other way as well. It means that if you, as a parent, handle your emotions in a good manner, you will not transfer negativity onto your family.

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