



Covid-19 Patient Education

What is Covid-19?

COVID-19 stands for "coronavirus disease 2019." It is caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2. People with COVID-19 can have fever, cough, trouble breathing, and other symptoms. Problems with breathing happen when the infection affects the lungs and causes pneumonia. Most people who get COVID-19 will not get severely ill. But some do.

The virus can be passed easily between people who live together. But it can also spread at gatherings where people are talking close together, shaking hands, hugging, sharing food, or even singing together. A person can be infected and spread the virus to others, even without having any symptoms. Some strains or "variants" of the virus are more contagious than others and can be spread very easily.

What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

- Fever or chills
- Cough, congestion, or runny nose
- Loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing
- Body aches
- Fatigue or headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

What do I do if my child tests positive for Covid-19?

If your child tests **positive**, a quarantine is required.

- Your child should remain at home for **5 days** from the time they are diagnosed. They should wear a mask around others.
- If symptoms are improving or if your child was asymptomatic when diagnosed, they may leave the house after 5 days. **They should wear a mask around others for an additional 5 days.** If your child can not wear a mask appropriately, they should remain at home for a total of **10 days**.
- Re-testing for clearance of Covid-19 is not required
- If a fever persists or if symptoms worsen, your child should remain home beyond the initial 5-day quarantine until symptoms improve and fever resolves for a full 24 hours.

How do I treat Covid-19 at Home?

There is no known specific treatment for COVID-19. Most healthy children who get infected are able to recover at home, and usually get better within a week or 2.

Supportive Care:

- **Fluids:** Fever increases the amount of water lost from the body. Encourage your child to drink lots of fluids to loosen lung secretions and make it easier to breathe.
 - For babies under 1 year old, continue regular formula feedings or breastfeeding.
 - For babies > 6 months, you may use Pedialyte in between formula/ breastfeeding. This should not be a source of primary nutrition or take the place of formula/breast milk.
 - For children over 1 year old, give plenty of fluids, such as water, juice, gelatin water, soda without caffeine, ginger ale, lemonade, Pedialyte, Gatorade, or ice pops.
- **Eating:** If your child doesn't want to eat solid foods, it's OK for a few days, as long as he or she drinks lots of fluid.
- **Rest:** Keep children with fever at home resting or playing quietly until the fever is gone. Encourage frequent naps.
- **Sleep:** Periods of sleeplessness and irritability are common.
 - Children 1 year and older: Have your child sleep in a slightly upright position. This is to help make breathing easier. If possible, raise the head of the bed slightly. Or raise your older child's head and upper body up with extra pillows.
 - Babies younger than 12 months: Never use pillows or put your baby to sleep on their stomach or side. Babies younger than 12 months should sleep on a flat surface on their back. Don't use car seats, strollers, swings, baby carriers, and baby slings for sleep. If your baby falls asleep in one of these, move them to a flat, firm surface as soon as you can.
- **Cough:** Coughing is a normal part of this illness. A cool mist humidifier at the bedside may help. Clean the humidifier every day to prevent mold. Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines don't help any better than syrup with no medicine in it. They also can cause serious side effects, especially in babies under 2 years of age.
 - Don't give OTC cough or cold medicines to children under 6 years unless your healthcare provider has specifically advised you to do so.
 - Children over the age of 6 may be able to take mucolytics (Mucinex) during the day to help clear congestion. Cough suppressants may be recommended, but should only be used as recommended by your doctor or nurse.
 - Keep your child away from cigarette smoke. It can make the cough worse. Don't let anyone smoke in your house or car.

- Children over 12 months of age may use honey as a cough suppressant as needed throughout the day
- **Nasal congestion:** Suction the nose of babies with a bulb syringe. You may put 2 to 3 drops of nasal saline nose drops in each nostril before suctioning. This helps thin and remove secretions.
 - Saline nose drops are available without a prescription. You can also use 1/4 teaspoon of table salt dissolved in 1 cup of warm water.
- **Fever:** Use children's acetaminophen for fever, fussiness, or discomfort, unless another medicine was prescribed. In babies over 6 months of age, you may use children's ibuprofen or acetaminophen. If your child has chronic liver or kidney disease, talk with your child's healthcare provider before using these medicines. Never give aspirin to anyone younger than 18 years of age who is ill with a viral infection or fever. It may cause severe liver or brain damage.

Preventing spread.

How can I prevent my child from getting or spreading COVID-19?

In the United States, a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is available for people 5 years and older. Getting your child vaccinated is the best way to protect them. Experts also recommend that children 12 and older get a "booster" shot for extra protection. Experts are studying vaccines for children under 5, and these will eventually also be available.

People who are fully vaccinated have a much lower risk of getting sick from the virus. The best way to protect babies and very young children is for as many older people as possible to get vaccinated, including siblings, parents, and caregivers.

In addition to vaccines, there are other things people can do to reduce their chances of getting COVID-19. These things will also help slow the spread of infection.

If your child is old enough, you can teach them to:

- **Wear a face mask in public.** Experts in many countries recommend this for everyone, including children 2 years and older. This is mostly so that if your child is sick, even if they don't have any symptoms, they are less likely to spread the infection to other people. It might also help protect your child from others who could be sick. Make sure the mask fits snugly against your child's face and covers their mouth and nose.
- **Practice "social distancing."** This means staying at least 6 feet (about 2 meters) away from other people. In places where the virus is still spreading quickly, keeping people apart can help slow the spread.
 - Keep in mind that the virus can spread both indoors and outdoors. But being outdoors is less risky. Also, the more people your child comes into contact with, the higher the risk of spreading the virus.
- **Wash their hands with soap and water often.** This is especially important after being out in public. Make sure to rub the hands with soap for at least 20 seconds, cleaning the wrists, fingernails, and in between the fingers. Then rinse the hands and dry them with a paper towel that can be thrown away. Hand washing also helps protect your child from other illnesses, like the flu or the common cold.

- Washing with soap and water is best. But if your child is not near a sink, they can use a hand sanitizing gel to clean their hands. The gels with at least 60 percent alcohol work the best. It's important to keep sanitizer out of young children's reach, since the alcohol can be harmful if swallowed. If your child is younger than 6 years old, help them when they use sanitizer.
- **Avoid touching their face** with their hands, especially their mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Younger children might need help or reminders to do these things.

It's important to keep your child home, and away from other people, until your doctor or nurse says it's safe for them to go back to their normal activities. This decision will depend on how long it has been since the child had symptoms.

If your child is at risk for getting seriously ill, doctors might recommend treatment even if they only have mild symptoms. This can lower their risk of getting sicker. Options might include pills that they take for a few days, a treatment called "monoclonal antibodies" that is given through an IV or as a shot, and another medicine that is given by IV.

Call 911 or seek emergency room care if any of these occur:

- Increased wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Unusual drowsiness or confusion
- Dry mouth, sunken eyes, or other signs of dehydration

What should I do if my child was exposed to someone with COVID-19?

If your child was in close contact with someone with COVID-19, what to do next depends on whether your child has been vaccinated. Although people who are fully vaccinated are less likely to get sick and infect others, it can still happen. This is why it's important to take steps to lower this risk.

If your child is fully vaccinated:

- Your child does not need to self-quarantine. But they should wear a mask around all other people for 10 days.
- If possible, get your child tested 5 days after the exposure:
 - If the test is negative, they should continue to wear a mask around other people until **10 total days** have passed.
 - If the test is positive, they should stay home and "self-isolate" for at least **5 days**.
- **If your child starts to have symptoms at any point, they should stay home and get tested again.**

If your child has not been vaccinated:

- Your child should self-quarantine for **5 days** after the exposure. This means staying home and away from other people as much as possible. They should wear a mask around other people while at home.
- If possible, get your child tested 5 days after the exposure:
 - If the test is negative, they should continue to wear a mask around other people until **10 total days** have passed.
 - If the test is positive, they should stay home and "self-isolate" for at least **5 days**.
- **If your child starts to have symptoms at any point, they should stay home and get tested again.**

If you are not sure whether your child needs to self-quarantine, or when they can go back to their normal activities, ask your doctor or nurse