

Family Education Sheet



Boston Children's Hospital

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www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation

Caring for Your Child at Home When COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) Testing Has Not Been Done

Your child is ill but has not met criteria to be tested for COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019), a virus that causes mild to severe respiratory illness symptoms, like a fever, cough and shortness of breath. This sheet explains important steps you should take at home.

What symptoms should I watch for at home?

Watch for:



Temperature
/ fever



Cough



Runny
nose



Sore
throat



Shortness
of breath
or
breathing
problems

- **If these symptoms get worse, call your pediatrician.** Tell them that your child is having COVID-19-like symptoms.
- If it is an emergency, call 911 or your local emergency services number. Tell them that your child is having COVID-19-like symptoms.

When should I call my child's health care provider?

Call if your child:

- Has a fever higher than 100.4/ 38.0°C
- Won't drink
- Has ear pain or fluid coming out of the ear
- Has red eyes or yellow fluid coming from the eyes
- Has a runny or stuffy nose for 2 weeks or longer
- Has a bad cough or chest pain
- Has a persistent headache
- Has diarrhea
- Is getting sicker

When should I take my child to the emergency room?

Go to the Emergency Room if your child:

- Appears dehydrated; signs include dizziness, drowsiness, a dry or sticky mouth, sunken eyes, crying with few or no tears, or peeing less often (or having fewer wet diapers)
- Unable to drink or talk
- Has trouble breathing, is breathing fast, or looks blue around the lips.

How can I help my child to feel better at home?

- Have your child **rest, eat healthy food** and **drink a lot of water**.
- **If your child has a fever**, use medicines to help lower it (as directed on the label or by your pediatrician).
- **Take your child's temperature by mouth with a digital thermometer at least twice a day**, at least 4 hours after giving medicine. Call your pediatrician if it is over 100.4°F/ 38°C.

What steps should my family take?

Stay at home and away from others

- **Self-isolate:** Your child should stay home and away from others to lower the chance of spreading the illness.
- **Keep your child in 1 room of the house:** Your child should stay in 1 room or be at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from other people and pets.
- **Use a delivery or pick-up service for groceries**, or ask friends or family members to drop off groceries and supplies. Have them leave them outside to avoid direct contact.
- **Avoid visitors and public places:** We do not recommend going to activities or gatherings outside your home, like school, church/mosques, grocery stores or restaurants. We do not recommend playdates or visitors.
- **If caregivers must come into your home for your child's care**, let them know that your child has symptoms similar to COVID-19, but did not meet criteria for testing. Caregivers should wear personal protective equipment, like gloves, eye protection and face masks.

Practice good hygiene

- **Choose 1 healthy family member to care for your child.** We know that isn't always possible.
- **Have your child wear a face mask or cloth face covering** (like a bandana or scarf) that covers their nose and mouth when they are around people, including you. If they can't wear a face mask, you should wear one while in the same room with them.
- **Everyone in the house should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after contact with your child. Natural soap is OK to use. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has 60-95% alcohol to clean your hands if soap and water aren't available. Wash your hands with soap and water if they look dirty.
- **Everyone in the house should avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth** unless they have just cleaned their hands.

Can I breastfeed my child?

- If your infant is ill and breastfeeding, **you can still breastfeed your baby.**
 - Be sure to wash your hands and your chest area well with soap and warm water before and after you touch your baby.

How can I reduce germs in my home?

- If possible, **have your child use a separate bathroom** from other members of your household. The bathroom should be cleaned frequently and the toilet lid closed when flushing to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Clean commonly touched objects** including door handles, toilets and faucets and electronic devices (phones, computers) after touching them.
 - Use a regular household cleaner or make your own disinfectant by mixing 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
 - Wear disposable gloves (ones you can throw away) when cleaning.
- **When cleaning, wear a medical face mask and disposable gloves.** You can also wear a bandana or scarf if you do not have a medical face mask. After cleaning:
 - Remove gloves and throw away.
 - Wash your hands right away with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
 - Remove face mask and throw it away.
 - Wash your hands again with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- **Don't share household items with your sick child;** all used household items, such as bedding and towels, should be cleaned well after use.
 - Sick people should use their own tube of toothpaste and soap.
- **Open windows and doors,** as weather allows, to keep air moving through your home.

When can we stop home isolation?

In general, people can leave home when these 3 things have happened:

- They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that's 3 full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
- and**
- Other symptoms have gotten better, such as cough or shortness of breath
- and**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

For more information

If you're a Boston Children's patient or family member and have questions general questions about COVID-19, please call our COVID-19 hotline at 855-281-5730 or 617-355-4200.

Visit Boston Children's COVID-19 website:
childrenshospital.org/conditions-and-treatments/conditions/c/coronavirus

Visit the CDC website:
cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone
cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html

CDC: COVID-19 and Breastfeeding
cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/maternal-or-infant-illnesses/covid-19-and-breastfeeding.html

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#) and [Spanish](#).

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