

# Family Education Sheet



Boston Children's Hospital

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[www.bostonchildrens.org/familyeducation](http://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
  - Cough
  - Sore throat
  - Shortness of breath or breathing problems
  - Chills
  - Muscle or body aches
  - New loss of taste or smell
- **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 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, most people with COVID-19 can leave home when these 3 things have happened:

- They have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fevers
- and**
- Other symptoms have improved, such as cough or shortness of breath
- and**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared\*

\*In some cases, for people with severe illness or immune system problems, 20 days need to pass since symptoms first appeared

## What are some resources for my family?

### Massachusetts-based resources

#### Massachusetts 211

Dial 2-1-1 on your phone. It connects you to information about critical health and human services available in the community.

If you are unable to reach 2-1-1, call 1-877-211-MASS (6277). Hearing-impaired callers can call 508-370-4890 TTY.

### Food resources

#### FoodSource Hotline

To find food resources in your community, call 1-800-645-8333 TTY 1-800-377-1292

[projectbread.org/get-help/foodsource-hotline.html](http://projectbread.org/get-help/foodsource-hotline.html)

#### The Greater Boston Food Bank

The Greater Boston Food Bank partners with 520+ hunger-relief agencies in Eastern Massachusetts.

Call: 617-427-5200

[gbfb.org/need-food](http://gbfb.org/need-food)

### Financial support

#### United Way MA COVID-19 Family Support Fund

<https://unitedwaymassbay.org/get-involved/covid-19-family-fund/>

For general questions, email [info@supportunitedway.org](mailto:info@supportunitedway.org)

### Transportation

#### Ridematch

A searchable directory of public, private and accessible transportation options in Massachusetts.

<https://massridematch.org/>

### Emotional support

#### Parental Stress Line

Need someone to talk to? This 24/7 service is free and confidential, 24/7. Call: 1-800-632-8188

#### NAMI Helpline:

If you're in a crisis, call 1-800-950 6264 or text "NAMI" to 741741.

#### How to Cope with Anxiety Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This website suggests ways how to cope with stress during the pandemic. It's appropriate for families and providers.

[verywellmind.com/managing-coronavirus-anxiety-4798909](http://verywellmind.com/managing-coronavirus-anxiety-4798909)

#### Free online guided meditation:

[meditationmuseum.org/](http://meditationmuseum.org/)

## 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](https://childrenshospital.org/conditions-and-treatments/conditions/c/coronavirus)

**Scan QR codes with your phone camera**



Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website:  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)



CDC: If You Are Sick or Caring for Someone  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html](https://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](https://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](#).*