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 fever, cough and shortness of breath. This family education sheet talks about important next steps you should take at home.

What precautions should my family take?

Stay at home and away from others
- We recommend that you and your family self-isolate. This means staying home with your child and keeping them away from other people to lower the chance of spreading illness.
- While at home, your child should stay in one room or be at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from other household members, including pets.
- Try to keep your child away from elderly (older) adults and people with serious medical conditions, like heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes. They are at a higher risk of getting sick.

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 also do not recommend playdates or visitors.

Practice good hygiene
Try to designate one healthy family member to care for your child.
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially after contact with your child. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth unless you have just cleaned your hands.

What else can my family do while my child is ill?
- Everyone in your house should wash their hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds and dry them well. If your hands are not visibly dirty, you can use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- If your infant is ill and breastfeeding, you can still breastfeed your baby.
  - Be sure to wash your hands and your chest area thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after you touch your baby.
- Use a delivery or pick-up service for groceries or ask friends or family members to drop off groceries and supplies at your front door to avoid direct contact.

How should I keep my home germ-free?
- 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 when cleaning.
- Open windows and doors, as weather allows, to keep air moving through your home.

What symptoms should I watch for at home? When should I call for help?
Monitor your child’s symptoms, including temperature/fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath or breathing problems.
If these symptoms get worse, call your pediatrician to discuss. If it is an emergency, call 911 or your local emergency services number.

How can I help my child to feel better at home?
Have your child rest, eat healthy food and drink plenty of water.
- Use fever-reducing medications (as directed on the label or by your pediatrician) as needed if your child has a fever.
- Take your child’s temperature by mouth (orally) with a digital thermometer at least twice a day, at least 4 hours after giving medicine. Call your provider if it is over 38.0 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit).

Where can I learn more about COVID-19?
- If you are a Boston Children's patient or family member and you 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.

This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic, Chinese Simplified and Spanish.