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 doorknobs, 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

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

The Greater Boston Food Bank
The Greater Boston Food Bank partners with 520+ hunger-relief agencies in Eastern Massachusetts.
Call: 617-427-5200
gfb.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

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

Free online guided meditation:
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

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: 

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.