

COVID-19 Prevention

Definition

- COVID-19 is a viral respiratory infection. It may be widespread in your community.
- Because it can be serious, you don't want your family to catch it.
- Here are some tips on how to protect your family.
- **Updated: November 15, 2021** (version 14)

COVID-19 - How it is Spread

- COVID-19 is spread from person to person.
- The virus spreads from respiratory droplets produced when a person coughs, sneezes, shouts or sings. The infected droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person or land on the surface of their face or eyes.
- Most infected people also have respiratory secretions on their hands. These secretions get transferred to healthy people on doorknobs, faucet handles etc. The virus then gets transferred to healthy people when they touch their face or rub their eyes.
- These methods are how most respiratory viruses spread.

COVID-19 Facts

- **COVID-19 Symptoms:** The most common symptoms are cough and fever. Some patients progress to shortness of breath. Other common symptoms are chills, shivering (shaking), runny nose, sore throat, muscle pains or body aches, headache, and loss of smell and taste. The CDC also includes the following less common symptoms: fatigue (tiredness), nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Some people may have very mild symptoms. Some can have no symptoms, but still spread the disease
- **Incubation Period:** average 5 days (range 2 to 14 days) after coming in contact with the secretions of a person who has COVID-19.
- **No Symptoms but Infected:** Over 30% of infected patients have no symptoms.
- **Mild Infections:** 80% of those with symptoms have a mild illness, much like normal flu or a bad cold. The symptoms usually last 2 weeks.
- **Severe Infections:** 20% of those with symptoms that are not vaccinated develop trouble breathing from viral pneumonia. Many of these need to be admitted to the hospital. People with complications generally recover in 3 to 6 weeks. Severe infections are very rare in people who are vaccinated.
- **Deaths:** Children generally have a mild illness and recover quickly. Pediatric deaths are very rare. Older adults, especially those with chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, obesity or weak immune systems, have the highest death rates. The overall adult death rate is around 2 per 1000.
- **Vaccine:** Safe and highly effective vaccines are available. Some vaccines are 2 doses, given 3-4 weeks apart. Others are a single dose. Similar to flu shots, they will probably provide protection for 6 to 9 months. At this time, vaccines have been tested and are FDA approved for 5 years and older. Breakthrough cases are COVID-19 infections that bypass vaccine protection. They are rare and many do not cause any symptoms. The vaccine prevents almost all hospital admissions and deaths.
- **Booster Vaccines:** In November 2021, the CDC recommended a booster shot for all adults. For Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, booster shot needed if 6 or more months after the first ones. For Johnson and Johnson vaccine, booster shot needed if 2 or more months after the first one. Experts predict we may need a yearly booster, just like the flu vaccine.
- **Treatment:** New treatments for severe COVID-19 are becoming available. They are mainly used for

hospitalized patients and high-risk patients.

Trusted Sources for Accurate COVID-19 Information - CDC and AAP

- To meet the high demand for COVID-19 information, when possible, find your answers online. Here are the most reliable websites:
- CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>
- American Academy of Pediatrics parent website: www.healthychildren.org
- Always follow the most current CDC recommendations if they are different than those in this document.

Care Advice

1. COVID-19 Vaccine - Get Your COVID-19 Shot:

- Vaccines have saved more lives than any other public health action. They are the most powerful weapon we have against deadly infectious diseases. Follow the science.
- Safe and effective vaccines are now available for people age 5 and older
- If you have the chance to get a COVID-19 vaccine, get one. It could save your life and protect your family.
- Vaccine Sites. Find a nearby vaccine site at vaccines.gov or call your doctor during office hours.

2. COVID-19 - How to Protect Yourself and Family from Catching It - The Basics:

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine. It is your best protection against this serious infection.
- Avoid close contact with people outside your family unit. Avoid closed spaces (indoors) when possible and all crowds (even outdoors).
- If you can't avoid these places, always wear a face mask. Also, observe social (safe) distancing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water (very important). Always do before you eat.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if water is not available. Remember: soap and water work better.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth unless your hands are clean. Germs on the hands can get into your body this way.
- Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils.
- No longer shake hands. Greet others with a smile and a nod.
- If your child needs to be seen for an urgent medical problem, do not hesitate to go in. ERs and urgent care sites are safe places. They are well equipped to protect you against the virus. For non-urgent conditions, talk to your doctor's office first. Medical offices are also safe places.

3. **Social Distancing and COVID-19 Prevention:**

- Avoid any contact with people known to have COVID-19 infection. Avoid talking to or sitting close to them.
- **Social Distancing:** Try to stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from anyone who is sick, especially if they are coughing. Also called physical distancing. Avoid crowds because you can't tell who might be sick.
- If COVID-19 is widespread in your community, try to stay 6 feet away from everyone outside your family unit.
- **Stay at Home Orders:** Follow any stay at home (stay in place) orders in your community. Leave your home only for essential needs such as buying food or seeking medical care.
- **After Stay at Home Orders are Lifted:** Continue social distancing. Also wear a mask when entering any public building or outdoor crowded area. These precautions will be needed for many months. Your state public health department will decide when they are no longer needed.

4. **Face Masks and COVID-19 Prevention:**

- **Overview:** Face masks are essential for reducing the spread of COVID-19. Reason: People with COVID-19 can have no symptoms, but still spread the virus. Masks also will reduce the spread of flu.
- Because of COVID-19 variants such as Delta, mask wearing is still recommended. This is the same for COVID-19 vaccinated people as well as those that are not. Mask wearing is even more important if you are in an area of high COVID-19 spread or have health problems.
- **Sick People:** Must always wear a face mask if you are around other people or need to leave home. Example: for medical visits. Exception: Patients with trouble breathing in a mask can consider a loose face covering such as a bandana.
- **Well People Should Wear Masks if:**
 - You are in indoor public spaces (such as a church or a grocery store).
 - You are in a crowded outdoor setting (e.g., concert, music festival, rally).
 - You are traveling on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transit.
 - You are in a transit hub such as an airport or train station.
 - You must be around someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- **Well People Exceptions:** Face mask or covering is optional if outdoors in nature and you can avoid being within 6 feet of other people. Examples: on an outdoor walk or run.
- **Age Limits:** Face coverings also are not recommended for children under 2 years (CDC).

5. **Keep Your Body Strong:**

- Get your body ready to fight the COVID-19 virus.
- Get enough sleep (very important)
- Keep your heart strong. Walk or exercise every day. Take the stairs. Caution: avoid physical exhaustion.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Eat healthy meals. Avoid overeating to deal with your fears.
- Avoid the over-use of anti-fever medicines. Fever fights infections and ramps up your immune system

6. **Keep Your Mind Positive:**

- **Live in the present, not the future.** The future is where your needless worries live.
- **Stay positive.** Use a mantra to reduce your fears, such as "I am strong".
- **Get outdoors.** Take daily walks. Go to a park if you have one. Being in nature is good for your immune system.
- **Show love.** As long as they are well, hug your children and partner frequently. Speak to them in a kind and loving voice. Love strengthens your immune system.
- **Stay in touch.** Use regular phone calls and video chats to stay in touch with those you love.

7. **How to Protect Others - When You or Your Child are Sick:**

- **Stay home.** Don't go to school or work if you are sick. Don't go to stores, restaurants, places of worship or other public places. Avoid public transportation or ride sharing. Leave the house only if you need to seek medical care. Your doctor or local health department will tell you when it is safe to return.
- **No visitors.** Do Not allow any visitors, even friends.
- **Cover the cough.** Cough and sneeze into your shirt sleeve or inner elbow. Don't cough into your hand or the air. If available, sneeze into a tissue and throw it into trash can.
- **Wash hands often with soap and water.** After coughing or sneezing are important times.
- **Don't share glasses, plates or eating utensils.**
- **Wear a face mask when around others or you have go to a medical facility.**

Call Your Doctor Back If...

- You think you or your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

This handout is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of a medical professional. The accuracy of the information contained in this handout is not guaranteed and there may be variations in treatment that your doctor or nurse may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Copyright 2000-2021 Schmitt Pediatric Guidelines LLC

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

Provided by ClearTriage