# **Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and Children**

**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

.**Q:  What is the risk of my child becoming sick with COVID-19?**

A: Based on available evidence, children do not appear to be at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. You can learn more about who is most at risk for health problems if they have COVID-19 infection on CDC’s current [Risk Assessment](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/summary.html) page.

**Q: How can I protect my child from COVID-19 infection?**

You can encourage your child to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by teaching them to do the same things everyone should do to stay healthy.

* Clean hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
* Avoid people who are sick (coughing and sneezing)
* Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks)
* Launder items including washable plush toys as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people’s items.

You can find additional information on preventing COVID-19 at [Prevention for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html) and at [Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html). Additional information on how COVID-19 is spread is available at [How COVID-19 Spreads](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html).

**Q: Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?**

A:  No. The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar in children and adults. However, children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms. Reported symptoms in children include cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported. It’s not known yet whether some children may be at higher risk for severe illness, for example, children with underlying medical conditions and special healthcare needs. There is much more to be learned about how the disease impacts children.

**Q: Should children wear masks?**

A: No. If your child is healthy, there is no need for them to wear a facemask. Only people who have symptoms of illness or who are providing care to those who are ill should wear masks.

**Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children**

As public conversations around coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) increase, children may worry about themselves, their family, and friends getting ill with COVID-19.

Parents, family members, school staff, and other trusted adults can play an important role in helping children make sense of what they hear in a way that is honest, accurate, and minimizes anxiety or fear.

CDC has created guidance to help adults have conversations with children about COVID-19 and ways they can avoid getting and spreading the disease.

**General principles for talking to children**

**Remain calm and reassuring.**

* Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

**Make yourself available to listen and to talk.**

* Make time to talk. Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions.

**Avoid language that might blame others and lead to**[**stigma**](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/related-stigma.html).

* Remember that viruses can make anyone sick, regardless of a person’s race or ethnicity. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.

**Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.**

* Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.

**Provide information that is honest and accurate.**

* Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child.
* Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information.

**Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.**

* Remind children to stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick.
* Remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.
* Discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff.  
  (e.g., increased handwashing, cancellation of events or activities)
* Get children into a handwashing habit.
  + Teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
  + If soap and water are not available, teach them to use hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.

**Facts about COVID-19 for discussions with children**

Try to keep information simple and remind them that health and school officials are working hard to keep everyone safe and healthy.

**What is COVID-19?**

* COVID-19 is the short name for “coronavirus disease 2019.” It is a new virus. Doctors and scientists are still learning about it.
* Recently, this virus has made a lot of people sick. Scientists and doctors think that most people will be ok, especially kids, but some people might get pretty sick.
* Doctors and health experts are working hard to help people stay healthy.

**What can I do so that I don’t get COVID-19?**

* You can practice healthy habits at home, school, and play to help protect against the spread of COVID-19:
  + Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. If you sneeze or cough into a tissue, throw it in the trash right away.
  + Keep your hands out of your mouth, nose, and eyes. This will help keep germs out of your body.
  + Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Follow these five steps—wet, lather (make bubbles), scrub (rub together), rinse and dry. You can sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
  + If you don’t have soap and water, have an adult help you use a special hand cleaner.
  + Keep things clean. Older children can help adults at home and school clean the things we touch the most, like desks, doorknobs, light switches, and remote controls. (Note for adults: you can find more information about cleaning and disinfecting on [CDC’s website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html#routine-cleaning).)
  + If you feel sick, stay home. Just like you don’t want to get other people’s germs in your body, other people don’t want to get your germs either.

**What happens if you get sick with COVID-19?**

* COVID-19 can look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a little bit like having the flu. People can get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have not gotten very sick. Only a small group of people who get it have had more serious problems. From what doctors have seen so far, most children don’t seem to get very sick. While a lot of adults get sick, most adults get better.
* If you do get sick, it doesn’t mean you have COVID-19. People can get sick from all kinds of germs. What’s important to remember is that if you do get sick, the adults at home and school will help get you any help that you need.
* If you suspect your child may have COVID-19, call the healthcare facility to let them know before you bring your child in to see them.