



COVID-19

IF YOU ARE FULLY VACCINATED

Find [new guidance for fully vaccinated people](#). If you are not vaccinated, [find a vaccine](#).

Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19 in Children

Ways to Protect Children from getting and spreading COVID-19

Updated July 2, 2021

[Print](#)

Wash hands

Make sure your child [washes their hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. [Read more](#) and [watch a video](#) on how to wash hands correctly.

If soap and water are not readily available, make sure your child uses a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Teach your child to cover all surfaces of their hands with hand sanitizer and rub their hands together until they feel dry. If your child is under 6 years of age, supervise them when they use hand sanitizer.

You, as a parent, guardian, or caretaker, play an important role in teaching your child to wash their hands.

- Explain that handwashing can keep them healthy and stop germs from spreading to others.
- Be a good role model — if you wash your hands [as recommended](#), they're more likely to do the same.
- Make [handwashing a family activity](#).

Practice cough and sneeze etiquette by covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing or coughing, throwing the tissue in the closest garbage can, and washing your hands after you throw it away.

Avoid close contact

Keep your child at least 6 feet away from others who don't live with them and those who are sick (such as coughing and sneezing).

Limit in-person playtime and connect virtually with other children

CDC recognizes this pandemic has been stressful to many. Socializing and interacting with peers can be a healthy way for children to cope with stress and connect with others. However, the key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 is to limit close contact with others as much as possible.

An important guiding principle to remember is that **the more people your child interacts with, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread**. While your child may be spending time with other people as they return to childcare or school settings, you should limit your child's interactions with additional children and adults outside of childcare or school to decrease risk.

For playdates, the risk of COVID-19 increases as follows:

- **Lowest risk:** No in-person playdates. Children connect virtually (via phone calls and video chats).
- **Medium risk:** Infrequent playdates with the same family or friend who is also [practicing everyday preventive measures](#). Children maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from each other during the playdate. Playdates are held outdoors. (Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor space where there is less ventilation and it might be harder to keep children apart.)
- **Highest Risk:** Frequent indoor playdates with multiple friends or families who are not [practicing everyday preventive measures](#). Children do not maintain a distance of 6 feet from each other.

To help your child maintain social connections while social distancing, help them have supervised phone calls or video chats with their friends.

Limit your child's interaction with people at highest risk of severe illness from COVID-19

To protect those who are at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#), you may consider taking these extra precautions.

- Separate your child from others in your household who have an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Carefully consider who might be best to provide childcare if you are unable to care for your child (for example, you are not able to stay with your child while childcare or school is closed).
- Limit your child's contact with other people if someone at higher risk for COVID-19 will be providing care (such as an [older adult](#) or someone with [an underlying medical condition](#)).
- Postpone visits or trips to see grandparents, older family members and family members who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Consider connecting virtually or by writing letters.

Wear a mask

When to wear a mask if you are not fully vaccinated

- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
 - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with close contact with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- If you are fully vaccinated and have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may need to keep taking steps to protect yourself, like wearing a mask. Talk to your healthcare provider about steps you can take to manage your health and risks.
- If you are fully vaccinated, see [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#).

CDC recognizes that wearing masks may not be possible in every situation or for some people. Correct and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some children, such as children with certain disabilities, including cognitive, intellectual, developmental, sensory and behavioral disorders. [Learn more](#) about what you can do if your child or you cannot wear masks in certain situations.

Note that wearing a mask is **not** a substitute for other everyday prevention actions, like avoiding close contact with others and washing hands frequently.

Clean & disinfect

When and how to clean surfaces and objects

Cleaning with a household cleaner that contains soap or detergent reduces the amount of germs on surfaces and objects and decreases risk of infection from surfaces. In most situations, [cleaning alone removes most virus particles on surfaces](#).

- Clean high-touch surfaces and objects regularly (for example, daily or after each use) and after you have visitors in your

nome.

- Focus on high-touch surfaces and objects (doorknobs, tables, handles, light switches, phones, remote controls, and countertops).
- Clean other surfaces in your home when they are visibly dirty or as needed. Clean them more frequently if people in your household are [more likely to get very sick from](#) COVID-19. Disinfect [if certain conditions apply](#).
- Clean [surfaces](#) using a product suitable for each surface, following instructions on the product label.

When Someone Is Sick

If someone in your home is sick or someone who has COVID-19 has been in your home in the last 24 hours, [clean and disinfect your home](#). Disinfecting removes germs and reduces their spread.

For more information on cleaning and disinfecting safely, see [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home](#).

Wash items, including washable plush toys as needed

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- You can wash dirty laundry from a sick person together with other people's items.

Learn more about [cleaning and disinfecting your home](#).

Consider changing travel plans

Because travel increases your child's chances of coming in contact with others who may have COVID-19 and your child spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to others if they are infected, **staying home is the best way to protect your child and others from getting sick.**

We don't know if one type of travel is safer than others. Any place where travelers interact with other people (for example, airports, bus stations, train stations, gas stations, restaurants, and rest stops) are places travelers can be exposed to the virus in the air and on surfaces. It can also be hard to stay at least 6 feet apart from other people during travel. Learn more about [Travel During COVID-19](#).

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