



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Keep Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Updated May 20, 2020

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.

Watch your child for any signs of COVID-19 illness

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.

CDC and partners are investigating cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19. Learn more about [COVID-19 and multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children \(MIS-C\)](#).

Keep children healthy

Teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions

- Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Explain that hand washing can keep them healthy and stop the virus from spreading to others.
- Be a good role model—if you wash your hands often, they're more likely to do the same.
- Make [handwashing a family activity](#).
- Learn more about what you can do to [protect children](#).

Help your child stay active

- Encourage your child to play outdoors—it's great for physical and mental health. Take a walk with your child or go on a bike ride.
- Use indoor activity breaks (like stretch breaks or dance breaks) throughout the day to help your child stay healthy and focused.

Help your child stay socially connected

- Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.
- Write cards or letters to family members they may not be able to visit.
- Some schools and non-profits, such as the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) and [The Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#), have resources for social and emotional learning. Check to see if your school has tips and guidelines to help support social and emotional needs of your child.

Ask about school meal services

Check with your school on plans to continue meal services during the school dismissal. Many schools are keeping school facilities open to allow families to pick up meals or are providing grab-and-go meals at a central location.

Help your child cope with stress

Watch for signs of stress or behavior changes

Not all children and teens respond to stress in the same way. Some common changes to watch for include:

- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating habits
- Unhealthy sleeping habits
- Difficulty with attention and concentration

Support your child

- Parents can find more information about supporting their children during a COVID-19 outbreak on CDC's [Stress and Coping](#) page.
- [Talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak](#). Answer questions and [share facts](#) about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Learn more about common reactions that children may have and how you can [help children cope with emergencies](#).

More Information

[ASL Video Series: Tips to Keep Children Healthy While School is Out](#)

[ASL Video Series: Answers to Questions from Children about COVID-19](#)

[Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and Preschoolers](#)

Page last reviewed: May 20, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases