

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## Keep Children Healthy during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Ways to Promote Children's Wellbeing

Updated Sept. 17, 2020 [Print](#)

### Teach and reinforce everyday preventive actions

#### Wash hands

[Wash your hands](#) with soap and water for 20 seconds, and encourage your child to do the same. [Read more](#) and [watch a video](#) on how to wash hands correctly.

If soap and water are not available, use 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.

#### Wear a mask

Make sure everyone in your household [wears a mask](#) (if 2 years of age or older) when in public and when around people who don't live in your household. Ensure your child wears their masks correctly and safely.

Some children may find it challenging to wear a mask. If your child finds it challenging, you can consider [alternatives](#).

#### Avoid close contact

Make sure your child and everyone else in your household [keep at least 6 feet away from other people](#) who don't live with them and people who are sick (such as coughing and sneezing).

#### Cover coughs and sneezes

When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, throw your tissue in closest garbage can, and wash your hands. Encourage your child and all household members to do the same.

## Bring your child for their healthcare visits

Routine [well-child visits](#) and [vaccine visits](#) are essential, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Prepare for your child's healthcare visits

- Call your child's healthcare provider to ask about any upcoming appointments or to ask when your child's vaccinations are due.
- Ask your child's healthcare provider what steps they are taking to separate healthy patients from those who may be sick. Some healthcare providers may choose to delay in-person visits, which will be based on the situation in your community and your child's individual care plan.
- Notify your child's healthcare provider before your visit if you or your child have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#).

### Bring your child for well-child visits and vaccine visits

Your child's healthcare provider will check your child's growth and development at well-child visits. You can also track your child's developmental milestones with CDC's free [Milestone Tracker](#) app.

Vaccines are an important part of keeping your child healthy by protecting them against vaccine-preventable diseases. There are effective vaccines for illnesses such as measles, flu (influenza), whooping cough (pertussis), and other diseases that can spread from person to person. Although there is not yet a vaccine to help protect against COVID-19, your child should receive all of their recommended vaccines.

### Get a flu vaccine by the end of October

**A flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent flu.**

CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a flu vaccine each year [by the end of October](#) (with [rare exceptions](#)). You and your child can get a flu vaccine during healthcare visits, or you can find additional locations at [vaccinefinder.org](https://vaccinefinder.org) [↗](#).

Getting a flu vaccine can reduce the likelihood of your child getting sick, being hospitalized, or dying from flu. You and your family getting a flu vaccine will also help protect others around you who may be [more vulnerable to severe illness from flu](#), like [babies and young children](#), older adults, pregnant people, and those with certain medical conditions.

It is especially important for this upcoming flu season to help prevent over-burdening the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 and flu are both infectious illnesses that can affect breathing and have similar symptoms, but they are caused by

different viruses. Learn more about [similarities and differences between flu and COVID-19](#).

More about flu:

- Know the [emergency warning signs of flu](#) and seek medical care immediately if your child has any of these symptoms
- [Children & Flu](#)
- [Flu Information for Parents](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions on Flu for the 2020-2021 Season](#)

## Help your child stay active

Regular physical activity can improve your child's physical and mental health.

- Ensure your child stays active every day while taking [everyday preventive actions](#). Learn more about [how much physical activity your child should get daily](#).
- Find ways to [make physical activity a part of your child's life](#).
- Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself and making physical activity a part of your family's daily routine.

## Help your child stay socially connected

- Reach out to friends and family via phone or video chats.
- Write cards or letters to family members who they may not be able to visit.
- Check to see if your child's school has [tips and guidelines](#) to help support social and emotional needs of your child. 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.

## Help your child cope with stress

The COVID-19 pandemic can be stressful for both adults and children. [Learn more](#) about signs of stress in children, ways to support your child, and how to take care of your own mental health.

CDC has also developed several tools to help you care for your child's mental health and well-being. [COVID-19 Parental Resource Kit](#) offers tools to help you understand your child's social, emotional, and mental health challenges according to their age group and promote their well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Essentials for Parenting Toddlers and preschoolers page](#) provides guidance on how to address common parenting challenges, like tantrums and whining, and information on things you can do to build a positive, healthy relationship with your young children.

## Ask about school meal services

Check with your child's school on plans to continue meal services if school is closed to in-person learning for some or all students. Many schools may continue to provide meals in different ways, such as allowing families to pick up meals at the school or providing grab-and-go meals at other locations.

## Consider taking extra precautions

In addition to following the recommendations above, consider taking extra precautions if your child has a [disability](#) or a [developmental or behavioral disorder](#).



### Protect Your Health This Flu Season

Getting a flu vaccine during 2020-2021 is more important than ever. **Flu vaccination is especially important for children.** Children younger than 5 years old—especially those younger than 2— are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications. CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older.

[Flu Information for Parents](#)

[Young children are at higher risk for flu complications](#)

### 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](#)

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