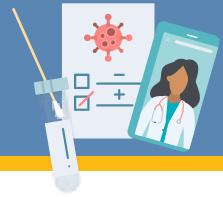# COVID-19 Guidance for Parents and Caregivers of Infants and Children, 1 month to 17 years old

This guidance is about parents, caregivers, infants, and children with at least one of the following:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Positive test for COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) and/or
- Recent close contact* with a person who has COVID-19 and/or a positive COVID-19 test.

*Close contact means that someone **was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for a total of 15 minutes or longer**, even if both people were wearing masks. Shorter periods that add up to 15 minutes on the same day also count. Close contact can also mean that someone had a briefer, but major, exposure to the COVID-19 positive person's respiratory droplets.

A person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is no longer considered to be contagious if they have completed their isolation period.

A person who was in quarantine following a close contact with a COVID-19 positive person is no longer considered contagious once they complete their quarantine if there are no symptoms and no positive test.

How sick can my child get?

Children older than 1 year old who are infected with COVID-19 are less likely to develop severe illness and complications from the virus. However, evidence suggests that children less than 1 year old or a child with underlying medical conditions, might be at risk for severe illness if they have:

- Severe genetic, neurologic, or metabolic conditions
- Heart disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Chronic kidney disease
- Trisomy 21 (Down Syndrome)
- Thalassemia
- Liver disease

Rarely, children can develop a condition called MIS-C (Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children). MIS-C is a condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. MIS-C can be serious, even deadly, but most children who were diagnosed with this condition got better with medical care. **Contact your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic right away if your child shows symptoms of MIS-C, such as:**

- Persistent fever
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Neck pain
- Rash
- Bloodshot eyes
- Feeling extra tired

Note that not all children will have all the same symptoms.

Seek emergency care right away if your child is showing any of these emergency warning signs or other concerning signs, such as:

- Trouble breathing
- Pain or pressure in the chest that does not go away
- New confusion
- Inability to wake up or stay awake
- Bluish lips
- Severe abdominal pain

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My child was exposed to someone with COVID-19. Does my child need to be tested during quarantine?

Ask your child's healthcare provider about testing during quarantine. **If symptoms develop, your child should be tested. Even if your child does not develop symptoms, ACPHD recommends testing for COVID-19 between 4 and 10 days after a close contact.**

If your child's test is positive, they can leave isolation when ALL of the following are true:

- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared or the day they were tested, **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use fever reducing medicines, **AND**
- Their other symptoms have improved.

If your child's test is negative (or if your child does not develop symptoms or is not tested), they can leave quarantine no sooner than 10 days after the close contact.

A 14-day quarantine is the safest option, especially if your child has regular contact with people who are at high risk ([over 65 or have underlying health conditions](#)). If your child does not have regular contact with people at high risk, then ACPHD allows a shorter quarantine period of 10 days.

How can a parent or caregiver with COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure reduce the chance of passing the virus to their infant or child?

- Wear a mask and always wash hands with soap and water before holding and coming into contact with the child.
- Maintain physical distance of more than 6 feet from the child when possible.

- **Plastic infant face shields are NOT recommended, and masks should NOT be placed on babies or children younger than 2 years old. These products are dangerous and could lead to suffocation.**

- **A child over 2 years old, who can wear a mask, can do so when in contact with the parent. Young children require close supervision when wearing masks.**

- If the infected parent or caregiver chooses to minimize contact with the child to reduce the chance of transmission, choose alternate caregivers who are not at increased risk for severe illness to care for the child, if possible.

- Separation from your infant or child **may not be** necessary if they have already tested positive for COVID-19. However, separation **may be** necessary for infants or children with a higher chance of severe illness, such as preterm infants, children with underlying medical conditions or infants/children who need higher levels of care. Separation also **may be** necessary if a parent or caregiver is too ill to care for their child.

- **A parent or caregiver with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 is no longer considered contagious when all the following are true:**
  - At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared or the day they were tested (up to 20 days if they have more severe illness or are severely immunocompromised), **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever reducing medicines, **AND**
  - Their other symptoms have improved.

- A parent or caregiver who has had close contact with a person who has COVID-19 is no longer considered to be potentially contagious when all the following are true:
  - At least 14 days have passed since their last contact, **AND**
  - They have not developed symptoms that could be due to COVID-19, **AND**
  - They have not tested positive for COVID-19.

What can parents and caregivers do to help prevent the spread COVID-19 at home?

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (even when at home). Wear a mask and stay 6 feet away from the person who is sick, if possible.

- Avoid gatherings that include people who do not live in your household.

- Wear a mask in public settings and when around people who do not live in their household.

- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash, and immediately wash hands.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- Clean hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Clean hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily, such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

- Contact healthcare provider if anyone at home develops symptoms of COVID-19 or has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or symptoms of COVID-19.