



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What Is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

At the end of 2019, a new type of coronavirus began making people sick with flu-like symptoms. The illness is called coronavirus disease-19 — COVID-19, for short. The virus spreads easily and has affected people all over the world.

What Are the Signs & Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 can cause a range of symptoms, including:

- fever
- cough
- trouble breathing
- symptoms of a cold such as a sore throat, congestion, or a runny nose
- chills
- muscle pain
- headache
- a loss of taste or smell
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea
- tiredness

The virus can be more serious in some people. And some people have no symptoms at all.

Some kids are having symptoms caused by inflammation throughout the body, sometimes several weeks after they were infected with the virus. This is called multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C). Doctors are trying to find out how these symptoms are related to coronavirus infection.

Symptoms seen in kids who have MIS-C included:

- fever
- belly pain
- vomiting or diarrhea
- a rash
- neck pain
- red eyes
- red, cracked lips
- swollen hands or feet
- swollen glands (lymph nodes)

Kids who are very sick with MIS-C may have trouble breathing, pain or pressure in the chest, bluish lips or face, confusion, or trouble staying awake.

How Does Coronavirus (COVID-19) Spread?

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus even if they don't have any symptoms. This happens when an infected person breathes, talks, sneezes, or coughs, sending tiny droplets into the air. These can land in the nose, mouth, or eyes of someone nearby, or be breathed in. Some of the tiniest droplets, called aerosols, can linger in the air for minutes to hours and travel on air currents. But it seems that the risk of spread is highest when people are less than 6 feet apart.

People also might get infected if they touch an infected droplet on a surface and then touch their own nose, mouth, or eyes.

Experts are looking at how the virus spreads and stays in the air, and whether it can spread through stool (poop).

Is Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dangerous to Children?

Experts are still learning about COVID-19. Far fewer cases have been reported in children. Usually, the virus seems to cause a milder infection in children than in adults or older people.

But in some cases of MIS-C, kids developed more serious symptoms, sometimes several weeks after being infected with the virus. Most kids with MIS-C get better after they get special care in the hospital, sometimes in the ICU (intensive care unit).

Call your doctor if your child has symptoms of COVID-19 or MIS-C, or just isn't feeling well. Tell the doctor if your child has been near someone with COVID-19, or lived in or traveled to an area where lots of people have the coronavirus.

Get care right away if your child:

- has trouble breathing
- has severe belly pain
- has pain or pressure in the chest
- is confused or not making sense
- is having trouble staying awake
- looks bluish in the lips or face

These symptoms can be warning signs of serious illness.

How Is Coronavirus (COVID-19) Treated?

There is no specific medicine for COVID-19. Most people with the illness, including children, get better with rest, fluids, and fever-reducing medicine. Some people get very ill and need treatment in the hospital.

COVID-19 vaccines are now available for people 12 and older. Everyone should get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible. Studies are under way to see if the vaccines are safe and effective in younger children.

What Can Parents Do?

Common steps that help prevent the spread of germs also work well against COVID-19. It's always wise to:

- Wash hands well and often. Wash for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid people who appear sick.
- Clean surfaces that get touched a lot (like doorknobs, counters, phones, etc.).

Is there a COVID-19 vaccine for children?

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is available under emergency use authorization to children ages 12 through 15. The FDA has also approved this vaccine to prevent COVID-19 in people age 16 and older. This vaccine requires two injections given 21 days apart. The second dose can be given up to six weeks after the first dose, if needed.

Research has shown that Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is 100% effective in preventing the COVID-19 virus in children ages 12 through 15. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is also 91% effective in preventing severe illness with COVID-19 in people age 16 and older.

Studies on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in younger children are also in progress.

Resources for more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/groups/families-covid-19.html>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/resources-for-parents-and-families>