

FACTSHEET



This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: <https://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets/feedback-form>.

COVID-19 in children

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a virus so symptoms tend to be very similar to those caused by other common viruses that your child may have had.

The majority of children infected with COVID-19 only have mild symptoms. It is also common for children to test positive for the virus who have no symptoms at all, at any stage.

The most common symptoms to expect include fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough, diarrhoea and lethargy.

A small number of children have other symptoms such as tummy pain, chest pain, headache, body aches, breathing difficulties or a loss of taste or smell.

As with all viruses, your child is more at risk of needing additional care if they have other medical conditions, such as asthma, obesity, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease or they are immuno-compromised.

Most children are able to be cared for at home by their parents or carers.

Upon diagnosis, it is necessary to isolate at home, until cleared to leave isolation by a medical professional or Public Health Officer.

Caring for your child at home

- Dress your child in appropriate clothing, so that they are comfortable - not sweating or shivering.
- Give your child plenty of fluids to drink. They may not feel like drinking much so will need your help and encouragement.
- Encourage them to rest and not overdo it.
- Use paracetamol (Panadol) or ibuprofen (Nurofen), only if you think your child is in pain or appears uncomfortable with a fever. Do not give more of these medicines than is allowed in a 24-hour period, as this may be harmful for children (see instructions on the label).
- Watch your child for signs that their illness is getting worse.

When to seek medical care for your child

- your child is very young (less than 3 months old);
- your child's symptoms seem to be worsening;
- your child has a chronic illness and your doctor has told you to seek help if your child gets a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness;
- you are worried about your child as a parent;
- your child's mental health is suffering as a result of isolation.

Symptoms that warrant urgent medical review:

- prolonged fever (more than 5 days);
- difficulty breathing;
- chest pain;
- severe or worsening abdominal pain;
- frequent vomiting and/or diarrhoea;
- oral intake or urine output that is less than half of normal;
- drowsiness, sleepiness or irritability.

For URGENT medical care or in an **Emergency call 000**

- Inform the operator that your child has COVID-19
- Ensure all family members wear a mask when the ambulance arrives.

Paramedics will attend to commence care and take your child to the Emergency Department. An ambulance is the safest way to get to the hospital from isolating at home.

Coping with Isolation

- Try to maintain a daily routine as much as possible, particularly around sleep and meal times.
- Ensure children enjoy some physical activity daily.
- Provide them with healthy meals and snacks and plenty of fluids.
- Encourage your child to talk to you about COVID-19 and how they are feeling.
- Reassure your child using age-appropriate language.
- Make time for fun activities.
- Keep in touch with family and friends using the phone, iPad, e-mail or social media.

Plan ahead to organise food supplies for your family

- Order online now as there could be delays in online grocery deliveries.
- You could also consider having a friend or family member drop food to your front door.

Following the Public Health Orders

- Do NOT leave your home unless advised to do so by Public Health or a medical professional.
- Do NOT drive yourself to the GP, emergency department or pharmacy.
- Do NOT invite family or friends into your home.

Limiting the spread of COVID-19

The virus spreads easily from one person to another, particularly when we come into close contact or live in the same household as someone who has the virus. You can limit the spread by:

- Keeping a distance from others (>1.5m);
- Wearing a mask;
- Covering coughs and sneezes;
- Continuing to wash hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol solution, gloves are not necessary.

If someone in your household has COVID-19:

- Clean high touch surfaces such as door handles, kitchen bench tops, switches and taps.
- Don't share personal household items such as cutlery and towels without first washing them.

Explaining COVID-19 to your children

<https://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/explaining-covid-19-kids>

