

Patient Education

COVID-19 Discharge Instructions, Child

You must carefully read the "Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer" below in order to understand and correctly use this information

About this topic

Coronavirus disease 2019 is also known as COVID-19. It is a viral illness that infects the lungs. It is caused by a virus called SARS-associated coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

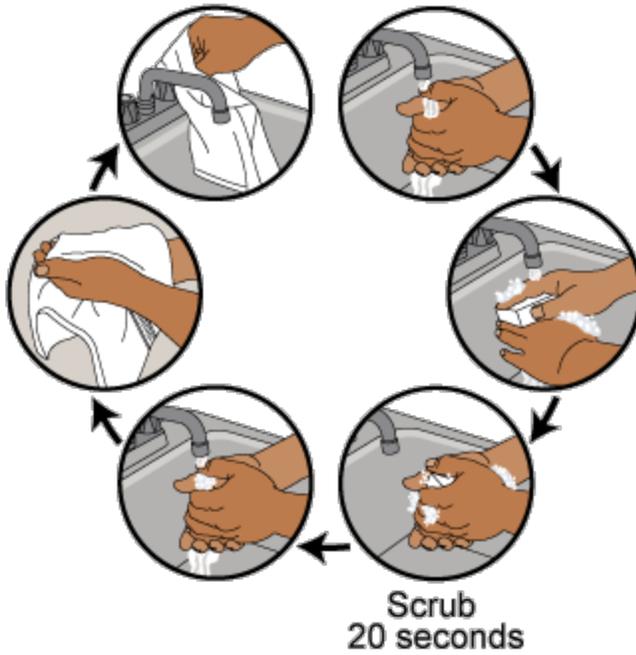
The signs of COVID-19 most often start a few days after you have been infected. In some people, it takes longer to show signs. Others never show signs of the infection. Your child may have a cough, fever, shaking chills and it may be hard for them to breathe. Your child may be very tired, have muscle aches, a headache or sore throat. Some children have an upset stomach or loose stools. Others lose their sense of smell or taste. Babies may have trouble feeding. Some children with COVID-19 get reddish-purple spots on their fingers or toes. Your child may not have these signs all the time and they may come and go while they are sick.

The virus spreads easily through droplets when a person with the infection talks, sneezes, or coughs. People can pass the virus on to others when they are talking close together, singing, hugging, sharing food, or shaking hands. Doctors believe the germs also survive on surfaces like tables, door handles, and telephones. However, this is not a common way that COVID-19 spreads. Doctors believe people can also spread the infection even if they don't have any symptoms, but they do not know how that happens. This is why keeping people apart is one of the best ways to slow the spread of the virus.

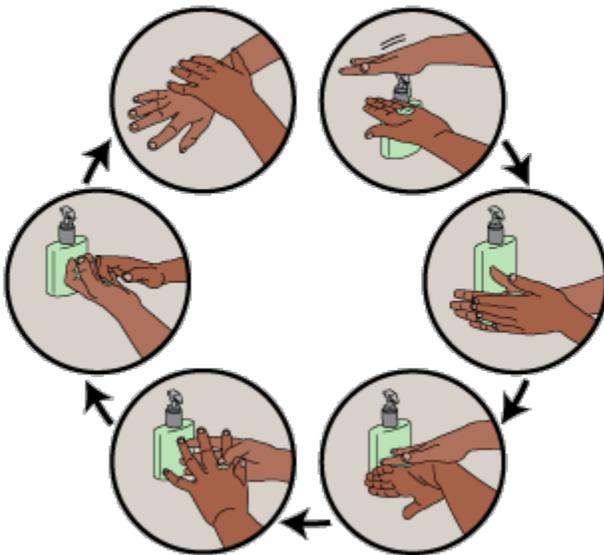
Some children have a mild case of COVID-19 and are able to be cared for at home and away from others until they feel better. Others may need to be in the hospital if they are very sick. Some children also have inflammation throughout their body. Children with COVID-19 must be isolated from others. They can start to be around others when their doctor says it is safe to do so.

Image(s)

Hand Washing



Hand Sanitizing



What care is needed at home?

- Ask your doctor what you need to do when you go home. Make sure you ask questions if you do not understand what the doctor says.
- Have your child drink lots of water, juice, or broth to replace fluids lost from a fever.

- You may use cool mist humidifiers in your child’s room to help ease congestion and coughing.
- Older children may want to use 2 to 3 pillows to prop themselves up when they lie down. This may make it easier to breathe and sleep.
- Do not smoke around your child.
- To lower the chance of passing the infection to others:
 - Children over the age of 2 should **wear a mask over their mouth and nose if they are around others** who are not sick. Cloth masks work best if they have more than one layer of fabric.
 - Help your child wash their hands often.
 - Keep your child at home in a separate room, away from others. Limit the number of caregivers. Only take your child out to get medical care.
 - Have your child use a separate bathroom if possible.
 - Have your child use separate dishes, utensils, bedding, towels, and electronic devices.
 - Wipe down frequently touched objects often with disinfectant. These include things like doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, phones, keyboards, countertops, and tables.
 - Avoid contact with pets.
 - Avoid having visitors in the house.

What follow-up care is needed?

- Your doctor may ask you to bring your child to the office to check on their progress. Be sure to keep these visits. Make sure you and children over age 2 wear a mask at these visits.
- If you can, tell the staff your child has COVID-19 ahead of time so they can take extra care to stop the disease from spreading. They may place you in a separate room; or ask that you wait in your car until they call you.
- It may take a few weeks before your child’s health returns to normal.

What drugs may be needed?

The doctor may order drugs to:

- Help with fever
- Help with breathing

Will physical activity be limited?

Your child may have to limit their physical activity. Talk to the doctor about the right amount of activity for your child. If your child has been very sick with COVID-19, it can take some time to get their strength back.

Will there be any other care needed?

Doctors do not know how long a person can pass the virus on to others after they are sick. This is why it is important to keep your child in a separate room, if possible, when they are sick. For now, doctors are giving general guidelines for you to follow after your child has been sick. Before your child goes around other people, they should:

- Be fever free for 3 days without taking any drugs to lower their fever
- Have no symptoms of cough or shortness of breath
- Wait at least 10 days after they first have symptoms or their first positive test, and they need to be symptom free as above. Some experts suggest waiting 14 days.

Sometimes doctors will also want them to have 2 negative tests for COVID-19 at least 1 day apart. Doctors also do not know if people will be able to catch this virus again.

What problems could happen?

- Fluid loss. This is dehydration.
- Short-term or long-term lung damage
- Heart problems
- Death

When do I need to call the doctor?

- Signs of infection. These include a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, chills, cough, more sputum, or change in color of sputum.
- Breathing is getting worse - harder or faster than before or your child feels like they are getting less air
- Trouble breathing while lying down flat on their back
- Your child needs to lean forward to help them breathe when sitting
- Your child develops reddish-purple spots on their fingers or toes
- Your baby has trouble feeding
- Fingertips, fingernails, skin, or lips are blue

Teach Back: Helping You Understand

The Teach Back Method helps you understand the information we are giving you. After you talk with the staff, tell them in your own words what you learned. This helps to make sure the staff has described each thing clearly. It also helps to explain things that may have been confusing. Before going home, make sure you can do these:

- I can tell you about my child's condition.

- I can tell you what may help ease my child's breathing.
- I can tell you what I can do to help avoid passing the infection to others.
- I can tell you what I will do if my child has trouble breathing; feels sleepy or confused; or their fingertips, fingernails, skin, or lips are blue.

Where can I learn more?

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

World Health Organization

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

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Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer:

This information is not specific medical advice and does not replace information you receive from your health care provider. This is only a brief summary of general information. It does NOT include all information about conditions, illnesses, injuries, tests, procedures, treatments, therapies, discharge instructions or life-style choices that may apply to you. You must talk with your health care provider for complete information about your health and treatment options. This information should not be used to decide whether or not to accept your health care provider's advice, instructions or recommendations. Only your health care provider has the knowledge and training to provide advice that is right for you.

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