



My child has COVID. What should I know?



Assume your child has COVID if they have a positive COVID test OR if they have COVID symptoms.

Symptoms of COVID include:

ANY ONE of the following:

- ✓ Fever and/or chills
- ✓ A cough that's new or worse than usual
- ✓ Shortness of breath
- ✓ A change in your sense of taste or smell

OR

ANY TWO of the following:

- ✓ Runny or stuffed-up nose
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Extreme tiredness
- ✓ Sore throat
- ✓ Muscle aches or joint pain
- ✓ Vomiting or diarrhea

Other symptoms that could go along with COVID-19 include: abdominal pain; pink eye; and (for children) loss of appetite.



A newborn less than 3-months old with a fever should go to the emergency department.

Does my child need a COVID test?

Most people do not qualify for PCR tests in Ontario. For more information about PCR testing, visit rebrand.ly/covid-test-new



Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) can be used to detect a COVID infection. RATs are not perfect. Make sure you get a good sample from the cheeks, throat and nostrils (find instructions here: rebrand.ly/RAT-Collect-Sample). If your child has symptoms of COVID, they need to self-isolate. If they have symptoms, they should take at least 2 RATs at least 24 hours apart. If both tests are negative, there is a lower chance that they have COVID. For more information about RATs, visit: rebrand.ly/covid-test-new



If your child has symptoms of COVID, they need to self isolate. For more information, visit rebrand.ly/Feeling-Unwell.

Once their isolation ends, they should take special precautions for 10 days. They can spread COVID for up to 10 days after they started to feel sick (or had a positive test).

If your child feels sick, but their symptoms don't meet the definition of COVID (above), they should self-isolate until their symptoms have been getting better for at least 24 hours (48 hours if they had vomiting or diarrhea). This will lower the chance of spreading other infections.

Use the Ontario COVID-19 school and child care screening tool to get advice about going back to school or child care: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

Self-isolation means staying home. It also means staying apart from others inside the home if possible.

It may not be practical to keep your child apart from others in the home. You can still wear masks, improve ventilation by opening windows and keeping the furnace fan "on", and using air filters. You can also have your child eat away from others.

For more information about self-isolation, visit <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-guide-isolation-caregivers.pdf?la=en>

If your newborn has COVID, they should still be seen by their doctor or nurse for a weight check within a few days of birth.

Caring for your child

Most children with COVID have a mild initial illness. Most children can be cared for safely at home.

If your child has ongoing health issues, they may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID and you should talk to someone on your health team.

How to care for your child:

- » Let them get plenty of rest
- » Make sure they get enough fluids, including water, soups, sports drinks or even popsicles. Breastmilk/formula is enough for young babies who drink only that
- » Treat fever or pain with over-the-counter medicine. Acetaminophen (Tylenol/ Tempra) is the best choice if your child can take it
- » Treat a stuffed-up nose with saline drops or sprays or the steam from a shower
- » Treat a cough with a humidifier or the steam from a shower. If the cough sounds like a bark, cool outside air may help. If your child is at least 1-year old, you can also give them 1-2 teaspoons of honey in the evening

When should I seek help for my child?

Call your doctor if your child:

- ✓ Has a fever that has lasted more than 4 days
- ✓ Is unusually irritable and won't stop fussing, even after treating their fever
- ✓ Has a fever that went away for 1 day or longer (without fever medicine) and then came back
- ✓ Has special needs that make caring for them more difficult
- ✓ Develops a new fever together with other symptoms like dizziness, extreme low energy, difficulty breathing, severe tummy pain, diarrhea, vomiting, red eyes or body rash a few days or weeks AFTER they recover from COVID. These symptoms could signal a rare complication of COVID

Call 911 or go to the emergency department if:

- ✓ You are worried that your child is seriously ill
- ✓ Your child is younger than 3 months and has a fever
- ✓ Your child has a weakened immune system because of a medical condition or treatment and has a fever
- ✓ Your child is working hard to breathe. For example, if they are breathing very fast, or if you see sucking in between the ribs with each breath, their stomach moving deeply in and out or if there is a blue colour to their lips or tongue
- ✓ Your child is at risk of dehydration from vomiting or constant diarrhea or if they aren't drinking enough fluids
- ✓ Your child is dehydrated. For example, they have a dry mouth, sunken eyes or they are crying without tears or peeing much less than usual

Remember: While COVID continues to be common in Ontario, there are things you can do to protect yourself and others.

- ✓ Get all vaccine doses that are recommended for you.
- ✓ If you feel sick, stay home.
- ✓ Wear a well-fitted mask in indoor public spaces.
- ✓ Gather outdoors whenever possible.
- ✓ Breathe clean air: open windows, keep the furnace fan "on", and use air filters.