

Coronavirus:

What Parents & Families Need to Know



Overview:

The emergence of a novel coronavirus (and associated COVID-19 infection) in early 2020 is posing challenges for families in the United States and around the globe.

This guide offers links to reliable information sources and focuses on considerations for parents and their children. Torchlight will continue to update this guide to make sure you have the latest information you need to care for your family and yourself.

💡 Get the facts from reliable sources.

Information about the coronavirus and associated COVID-19 infection is changing daily. Stories about the spread of the virus, and the spread of the COVID-19 respiratory infection it causes, are rampant in the news and on social media.

Unfortunately, not all sources of information are providing accurate and timely intelligence and advice. Follow these recommendations when choosing where to get your information:

- Refer to your state government website or local health department for updates on your state's plans and programs for dealing with coronavirus in

your area. You can find your state government website [here](#) or [here](#).

- Check the CDC's [website](#) for national and global information.
- Visit the website(s) for your child's school district, daycare, preschool, or university to learn about attendance and communicable disease policies. Stay current on closures, reopenings, access to online learning, etc.; check back frequently for updates specific to COVID-19.
- Be a critical consumer of broadcast news, whether it's radio, television, or online, especially when using social media.

💡 Take precautions.

Current data, indicate that older individuals, those with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, severe asthma, heart, lung, or kidney disease, and individuals with compromised immune systems are at higher risk for developing a serious case of COVID-19.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children may be the least affected demographic and generally experiences mild symptoms.

However, since COVID-19 is easily transmissible via close contact with infected individuals and surfaces, everyone should take precautions to limit exposure to and spreading of the virus.

The CDC recommends:

- **Stay at home** as much as possible.
- **Make sure you and/or your family members have access to several weeks of supplies**, prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, supplies, and food, in case you need to stay home for two or more weeks.
- **Stay away** from anyone who is sick or has been exposed to the virus.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds**, especially after going out of the house into the community.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** — key entry points for transmitting viruses.
- **Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces** that are touched frequently (e.g., mobile devices and telephones, door handles, TV remotes, car keys, faucets, microwave controls).
- **Avoid crowds and social gatherings**; practice social distancing, also called physical distancing. If you must go out, keep a distance of at least 6 feet between you and others.
- Keep up to date with CDC travel recommendations.

Practicing the following hygiene tips may also be helpful:

- **Post a note** on bathroom mirrors reminding family members to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Consider also posting notes near doorways or entryways as a reminder to wash hands when coming inside.
- Instruct children to **avoid sharing** snacks, cups, utensils with others by saying “No, thank you” or “I’d prefer not to.”
- **Leave shoes by the door** when entering the home.
- **Spray high touch items**, like backpacks and lunch bags, with a disinfectant spray, if available.

Put a plan in place for school closures or quarantine.

As the coronavirus spreads, extended closure of schools, daycares, after-school programs, and other childcare facilities will increase until the spread of the virus is contained. Consider the following issues and items as you create contingency plans for different scenarios that may occur.



Quick Tips

If you have access to them, keep **antibacterial hand wipes or hand-sanitizer with 60% alcohol** on your person or in your or your child's bags. Explain that frequent handwashing is best!

Check [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov), your state or local health department website, and your child's school's website for the most up-to-date information on COVID-19.

The CDC recommends that **facemasks be used only by individuals who are sick** (to prevent spreading the virus) or people caring for someone who is sick. The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask for protection from the coronavirus.

! Quick Tips

If you or your loved one is sick with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, the CDC recommends that you **stay at home, except to get medical care**. Call your doctor to determine whether you need to visit the doctor or go to the hospital for care.

If your child is non-verbal, consider using **visual schedules and instructions** to teach and promote proper handwashing and other important self-care strategies.

COVID-19

To address school closings or childcare challenges:

- **Talk to your employer** to create a shared understanding of your caregiving responsibilities. You may need to work from home for a while or take time off if you, your child, or another loved one who lives with you is exposed to the coronavirus or becomes ill (as well as to prevent any work-related exposure). Similarly, you may need to work at home if you are suddenly without childcare.

- **Communicate with the school** about how your child should continue his or her lesson plans from home and how s/he will make up missed assignments. Some teachers are using Google Classroom or other online learning portals to help students continue lessons during school closures or illness. Others may send assignments home in the form of worksheets, textbooks,

projects, etc. Be sure you understand what will be expected of your child during an extended absence.

- **Make entertaining activities available** to your children to keep him or her occupied during school closure or self-quarantine. Keep plenty of arts and crafts, good-fit books, board games, or educational television shows and apps on hand, especially if you are also working from home.

To address the possibility of quarantine or infection with COVID-19:

- **Create a list** of your child's medications, pharmacy, physicians, and any special needs in the event that another parent or family member needs to take over.
- **Determine who will care for your child if you become ill or quarantined**. Share all necessary information with the alternate caregiver(s).

- **Understand what you'll need to care for someone in your home with confirmed or suspected COVID-19**, or in the event of a self-quarantine:

If COVID-19 comes to your community and/or someone in your home is at greater risk of severe illness (those who are over age 60 or have underlying health conditions), it's a good idea to have a two-week supply of the following:

- masks (only needed if ill or caring for someone who is ill)
- disposable gloves
- laundry detergent
- hand soap
- trash bags
- prescription drugs
- over-the-counter medications
- groceries (non-perishable is best)
- infant supplies, such as formula, diapers, wipes, and baby food
- pet food or other pet supplies

💡 Learn what to do if you or your child gets sick.

Not all cold or flu-like symptoms are related to COVID-19. The primary symptoms of COVID-19 infection are:

- fever,
- cough, and
- difficulty breathing/shortness of breath.

The CDC recommends that you stay at home, except to get medical care. If you or your loved one develops these symptoms, call your doctor. The doctor will recommend whether you should remain recovering in isolation at home, need to be seen in the office, or should go to the hospital for care.

For most people who will experience a mild form of COVID-19, the CDC recommends:

- **Staying home.** Most people will experience COVID-19 as a mild illness and should remain isolated at home while they are ill.
- **Avoiding close contact with others if you are sick.** The CDC recommends keeping a physical distance of six feet and staying in well-ventilated areas.
- **Avoiding going out in public.** Don't go to work, school, church or other public areas where people gather.
- **Avoiding public transit:** Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing (such as Uber or Lyft), or taxis, if at all possible.



• Providing yourself with plenty of rest and supportive care.

If you have a child with COVID-19 (or who has had known exposure to COVID-19) or another flu-like illness, be sure to follow your local school district's attendance and communicable disease policies, as well as any COVID-19/flu protocols that have been specified by the district or your local board of health. If you are unsure of what these are, call your child's school for guidance or check the school's website.

💡 Learn how to provide care for a child or loved one with COVID-19.

The CDC recommends the following guidelines for caring for an individual with COVID-19:

- **Stay in contact** with your child or loved one's doctor to determine if s/he needs professional medical care or when s/he is able to come out of quarantine.
- Consider having the **patient rest in a separate room** and **use a separate bathroom** during quarantine, if and when possible.

(Note: This may not be always be possible or practical when caring for a younger child or in a smaller home. If the patient must share space with other members of the household, have him or her wear a mask during close contact.)

- **Avoid sharing** eating utensils, cups, and other items.
- **Wear disposable gloves and a mask while providing care.** Remove gloves and mask and dispose of them in a lined trash container. Gloves and mask should be used once and then disposed of; these are typically not designed for multi-use. **See instructions** for putting on and taking off protective gear.
- After providing care and removing protective gear, **wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.** Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched frequently during care.
- **Wash the patient's clothing, towels, washcloths, bedding, clothing** as directed and dry on your clothes dryer's highest setting.



If you are a mother breastfeeding an infant, it's important to understand that, to date, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to your infant via breastmilk, according to the CDC. Most pediatricians recommend continuing to breastfeed during viral infections, since breastmilk provides babies with antibodies that the mother is producing.

Currently, there is little data available about the risk associated with COVID-19 infection for women who are pregnant. For the most up-to-date information, visit the CDC's webpage called **"Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Pregnancy."**

Talk to your child about COVID-19.

Concern over COVID-19 may make some children feel anxious. Parents and caregivers can help by remaining calm and acknowledging an appropriate level of concern without panicking. Remember that children look to the adults in their lives for reassurance – if you are overly worried, chances are they will be, too!

Consider the following tips on how to address COVID-19 with your child:

- **Reassure your child** that schools and health officials are doing all they can to prevent the spread of infection and keep people safe.

- **Provide accurate, age-appropriate information** about the illness along with instruction on how to reduce the chance of illness (such as handwashing).
- **Let your child ask questions and discuss their concerns openly.** Use accurate information to re-frame their concerns, as appropriate.
- **Offer extra affection** during times of worry.
- **Limit television viewing, social media, or news access** that may be upsetting to your child. Explain that not everything being said about the coronavirus (at school, online, or in the media) is accurate.
- **Stick to your child's routine** to promote emotional and physical well-being, whenever possible.
- **If your child is non-verbal, consider using visual schedules** and instructions to teach and promote proper handwashing and other important self-care strategies.

Torchlight does not provide medical or legal advice, nor does it recommend or endorse any particular service provider(s). It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, nor is it a substitute for professional legal advice. Never ignore professional advice because of something you read on Torchlight. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or dial 911.

Contact Torchlight at support@torchlight.care for more information.

www.torchlight.care