

COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2)

Reportable to local or state health department

Consult the health department before posting or distributing the Parent/Guardian fact sheet.

COVID-19 is an acute viral illness. It is highly contagious, but rarely serious for most children who are not at higher risk. It is a common infection that may be prevented by vaccination.

CAUSE	SARS-CoV-2 virus, a member of the coronavirus family.
SYMPTOMS	<p>Children may experience a variety of these symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headaches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Asymptomatic infection is also possible (a child tests positive for COVID-19 but does not have any symptoms).</p> <p>Children with underlying health conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. The risk of death among children is low compared with adults, though some children in the United States have died from COVID-19. There is also some risk of children developing post-COVID conditions (“long COVID”), which includes a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems for four or more weeks after first being infected.</p> <p>A small number of children may develop a rare, but serious, condition called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C).</p>
SPREAD	<p>COVID-19 virus is spread when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or breathes out tiny droplets with COVID-19 virus into the air and another susceptible person breathes them in.</p> <p>Asymptomatic cases (cases with no symptoms) are also able to spread COVID-19 to others.</p>
INCUBATION	It takes from 2 to 14 days from the time a person is exposed until symptoms begin (or a person tests positive, if an asymptomatic case).
CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	<p>For symptomatic cases: From 2 days before to 10 days after symptoms developed.</p> <p>For asymptomatic cases: From 2 days before to 10 days after the positive test was taken.</p>
EXCLUSION	<p><u>Childcare and School:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Stay home for 5 days after symptoms first appeared (or 5 days after positive test, if asymptomatic)- Then continue to stay home until 24 hours fever free without the use of fever-reducing medication and symptoms have improved.- After this time, return to school/childcare and continue to wear a well-fitting mask, until 10 days have passed since exclusion period began.<ul style="list-style-type: none">o If student is under 2 years of age or student/staff is unable to wear a well-fitting mask while at school/childcare, then stay home for the full 10 days after symptom onset (or 10 days since positive test, if asymptomatic)

Children and staff exposed to a COVID-19 case no longer need to be excluded and should follow the recommendations below. Exposure is defined as being less than 6 feet from a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more throughout a 24-hour period.

- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after exposure
- Test for COVID-19 six days after exposure (even if no symptoms)
- Watch for symptoms for 10 days after exposure
 - o if any symptoms develop, isolate at home and get tested for COVID-19 right away

DIAGNOSIS

Tests are performed on nasopharyngeal (NP), oropharyngeal (OP) (throat), nasal, or saliva specimens. For more about testing, see health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/types.html

TREATMENT

Recommend parents/guardians call their health care provider. There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 in children with mild symptoms.

PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Monitor/screen for symptoms; ill staff/children should stay home and seek testing.
- Encourage COVID-19 vaccination for all students and staff. Recommend students/staff stay “up to date” with COVID-19 vaccination and boosters.
- Face coverings can help prevent the transmission of COVID-19, as well as other viral respiratory illnesses. Recommendations to wear face coverings in school/childcare settings should be consistent with local/state/federal guidelines. Note that face covering recommendations may change based on local activity.
- Close contacts should be tested 6 days after exposure occurred, even if asymptomatic. In general, anyone exposed should be tested immediately if symptoms develop.
- Cover nose and mouth with tissue when coughing and sneezing or cough/sneeze into your sleeve. Dispose of used tissues in the trash.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth or handling used tissues. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Establish a regular schedule and checklist for cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces (workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, doorknobs, etc.), shared items, shared equipment, and high traffic areas (see Section 2).
- Ventilation is an important factor in preventing COVID-19 transmission indoors. Facility owners and operations should evaluate the operational capacity of ventilation systems and increase and maintain ventilation provided throughout the building.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at (612) 543-5230 or call your local health department.