

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

COVID-19 in Children

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 usually presents with symptoms similar to the common cold. Symptoms can include fever or chills, cough, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Loss of taste and/or smell seems to be unique to COVID.

The Omicron variant's symptoms are similar to the original COVID, but tend to be milder.

How do infant and children's symptoms compare to symptoms in adults?

In general, infants and children tend to have milder symptoms than adults. Many children with COVID present with what appears to be no more than a common cold.

When should my child be tested?

If your child is symptomatic and has exposure to COVID, he/she should be tested. Testing will help to prevent the spread to other children or household members.

What is the difference between the PCR and antigen COVID test? How do I get a test?

The PCR COVID test is the most accurate. The antigen test is a good quick test to determine if your child is positive. The antigen test can be performed at home. If the antigen test is positive, we assume that the child has COVID and a PCR test is **NOT** necessary. If the antigen test is negative, it can be confirmed with a PCR test if there are further concerns.

My child tested positive for COVID. How do I treat the illness?

Treatment of COVID in children is exactly like the treatment of the common cold. Supportive care including Tylenol (infants 2 months and older) or Ibuprofen (infants 6 months and older) for fever or discomfort, getting adequate rest and pushing fluids are the staples of care.

If in rare circumstances, your child develops respiratory distress, shows signs of a possible ear infection, or has prolonged fevers (more than 3-4 days), he/she should be seen in the office.

What is the rate of hospitalization and death in children 18 years old and younger with COVID-19?

Keep in mind that the rate of hospitalization and death in children is very low due to COVID, compared to other diseases like RSV. Children with comorbidities such as obesity, diabetes, etc. are at higher risk of complications.

Can my child get vaccinated? Where can he/she get the vaccine?

Children 6 months and older now qualify for the COVID vaccine and the bivalent booster. Our office is administering the COVID vaccine in the 6 month to 4 year old age only for parents who are interested. For children 5 years and older, we are recommending Meijer, CVS or Walgreens to get the COVID vaccine at this time. The COVID vaccine in 5 and older comes in 10 dose vials that must be used in 12 hours once opened. Therefore, our office would waste too many doses and it is easy to obtain in these pharmacies.

What is MIS-C?

Multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children is a very rare but serious complication of COVID-19. It was more common initially during the alpha and delta strains of COVID.

It can happen during active COVID infection but is most often seen 2-4 weeks post COVID. Fevers are always present. The other symptoms of MIS-C include stomach pain, diarrhea, vomiting, bloodshot eyes, dizziness or lightheadedness, and rash. If your child develops MIS-C symptoms shortly after COVID infection, your child needs to be seen in our office or the pediatric emergency department. MIS-C is an emergency and children can quickly become very ill.