

# COVID-19 AND CHILDREN

## BACKGROUND

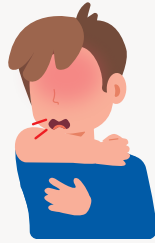
COVID-19 is a viral illness caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2 and is spread through respiratory droplets when in [close contact](#) with someone who is infected. This virus can often cause a mild illness, with [symptoms](#) similar to that of the common cold. It can also cause more severe illness, with symptoms such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs).

## COMMON SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN

Watch for any of the following symptoms of COVID-19.



**FEVER AND/OR CHILLS**  
(temperature of  
37.8°C or higher)



**COUGH OR BARKING  
COUGH (ROUP)**



**SHORTNESS  
OF BREATH**



**DECREASE OR LOSS OF  
SMELL OR TASTE**

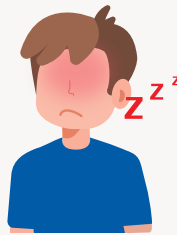
### OTHER SYMPTOMS:



**SORE THROAT OR  
DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING**



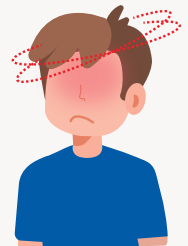
**RUNNY NOSE, OR  
NASAL CONGESTION**  
(unrelated to seasonal allergies or  
returning inside from the cold)



**EXTREME TIREDNESS  
OR MUSCLE ACHES**



**NAUSEA, VOMITING,  
AND DIARRHEA**



**HEADACHE**

If your child has one of the major symptoms, or two or more of the other symptoms listed on the [provincial school and child care screening tool](#), they must isolate immediately. Use the screening tool to determine how long your child and those in your household should stay home. Try your best to keep them separate from any siblings and other family members as much as possible.

If your child is sick with only one symptom from "Other Symptoms" above, or with a symptom not on the screening tool, they must stay home until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).

For more information, visit  
[york.ca/COVID19](http://york.ca/COVID19)

# RAPID ANTIGEN TEST (RAT) OR TAKE HOME PCR TEST

Individuals who have tested positive on a COVID-19 test (PCR, rapid antigen or rapid molecular) are considered positive and should follow isolation guidelines.

For further details and instructions for all close contacts and self-isolation requirements, visit [york.ca/COVID19Positive](https://york.ca/COVID19Positive).

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILD

COVID-19 spreads mainly from person-to-person when in close contact with someone who is infected.

### Ways you and your child can help decrease the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated if you are eligible
- Wash hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into a sleeve
- Avoid touching the face, eyes, nose or mouth
- Practice physical distancing (by staying 2-metres or 6-feet apart from people outside your family)
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you or your child are sick
- Wear a mask or face covering when physical distancing is not possible. When using a mask/face covering, always remember:
  - » Do not share your mask/face covering with other people
  - » Masks/face coverings should not be put on children under the age of two
  - » People who have trouble breathing should not wear a face covering
  - » The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends Canadians wear well-fitted three-layer masks
- Additional information: Masks and Young Children



## COVID-19 VACCINES FOR CHILDREN

- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for children aged 5+
- While younger people are less likely to experience serious cases of COVID-19, the vaccine is a safe and effective way to help control spread of the virus, reduce the severeness of symptoms from COVID-19, and support the return to a more normal life



# HOW TO SPEAK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT COVID-19

- It is important to take an honest approach when speaking to your child in order to ensure they have accurate information about the pandemic
- Use language that is age-appropriate
- Let your child know that many healthcare practitioners and scientific experts are working hard to keep us all safe and healthy
- Validate your child's concerns and feelings. You can let them know you will be there for them whenever they need you or when they have questions or concerns
- Some children may regress with certain skills. For example, a child may start asking for help with getting dressed or a younger child may have more tantrums or may show aggression. You can respond in a caring manner, and you can distract and redirect
- Limit exposure to news and media as this can increase anxiety for both children and parents, and when tuning into news, choose a reliable news source
- Find creative ways to keep in touch with family and friends, and maintain daily routines
- It is important for parents and caregivers to role model healthy coping skills, and self-care. You can do this by ensuring you get adequate sleep, eat a nutritious diet based on [Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating](#), and exercise daily
- If you or your child are having challenges coping during this time, reach out to your physician, [Family Services of York Region](#), the [Canadian Mental Health Association](#) or [Kids Help Phone](#) for support



# INFLAMMATORY ILLNESS AND CHILDREN

There is a rare, but serious inflammatory illness that has occurred in a small number of children globally, which is thought to be associated with COVID-19, and includes symptoms suggestive of an illness called Kawasaki disease. This illness usually occurs weeks after COVID-19 infection. Researchers believe that symptoms may be a delayed immune response to the virus.

- Some children develop symptoms such as persistent fever, severe stomach pain and gastrointestinal symptoms, including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and a rash, pink eye, and red/purple discolouration to hands, fingers, feet and/or toes, and skin may peel (COVID-toes)
- If you think your child has any of these symptoms, make sure to seek advice from a health care provider, including your child's doctor, [Telehealth Ontario](#), or go to the emergency room
- You should take your child to the hospital right away if they have any of the following symptoms:
  - » Fast breathing or trouble breathing
  - » Bluish skin colour
  - » Not drinking enough fluids
  - » Not waking up or not interacting
  - » Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held

# ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS DURING COVID-19

While vaccines provided through schools may be delayed with school closures, it is still important that you talk to your health care provider about staying up-to-date on other routine vaccines for infants and children.

- Routine vaccines: infants and children
  - » Two, four and six month vaccines (pertussis, tetanus, diphtheria, Hib, polio, pneumococcal and rotavirus)
  - » Twelve and fifteen month vaccines (meningococcal, pneumococcal, measles, mumps, rubella and varicella)
  - » Eighteen month vaccines (pertussis, tetanus, diphtheria, Hib, polio)
- Routine vaccines: adolescents and adults
  - » Boosters and catch-up vaccines can be given if you are seeing your healthcare provider for other urgent issues
- Seasonal influenza vaccines

