



Coronavirus Disease 2019

COVID-19



For parents & guardians: What to do when school is closed

Closing schools is one of the most powerful ways we have to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect people at higher risk from getting very sick or dying. We encourage parents and guardians to understand the situation and do their part to protect these people, too.

Though kids are thought to be at lower risk for severe disease from COVID-19, they can easily spread it to others.

- The people we are most concerned about are people over age 60 and people who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, or diabetes.

This is not just about keeping kids safe; it's about keeping the whole community safe by removing as many disease pathways as possible.

When school is closed, kids and grownups should practice social distancing. Aim to stay 6 feet away from others as much as possible.

Do not take children into any social setting when they are sick.

- If your child is sick, keep them home and separate them from others. Call your health care provider if you are concerned about your child's illness.
- Children and teens with chronic health issues and immune-compromising conditions should check with their health care provider before participating in a shared childcare arrangement or gathering.

If you are over 60 or have a chronic medical condition, avoid gatherings and caring for other people's children.

Small groups and big spaces lower the risk of disease spread.

Recommendations for indoor gatherings and sharing childcare

- Consider the size of the space vs. the size of the group. Aim to have the fewest number of children possible in the largest space available.
- Consider asking participating families to take their children's temperature before gathering.
- Frequently clean high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, toys, and keyboards. [Everyday cleaning products](#) are effective against COVID-19.
- Practice social distancing measures. With kids, that's hard. To increase the distance between children:
 - Think small – only a few friends at most.
 - Play games that involve fewer opportunities for touching.
 - When kids do touch, remind them to cover coughs and sneezes and to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly.

- Adults who join should practice social distancing and not participate if they are sick.

Recommendations for outdoor gatherings

- Try to limit groups to no more than 50 children per CDC guidance and state recommendations to limit groups to no more than 50 people.
- Limit face-to-face contact.
- Minimize activities that involve direct or close contact and avoid shared equipment as much as possible
- Repeatedly [clean and disinfect](#) any shared sporting equipment, especially objects touched with hands, like balls, bats, and playground equipment.
- Adults who join should practice social distancing and not participate if they are sick.

Recommendations for teenagers

- Aim for groups of 10 or fewer.
- Avoid spending time in larger groups and in crowded places like parties, retail spaces and movie theaters.
- Low-contact, outdoor activities, like hiking and bike riding, are great ways for small groups of teens to socialize.

Teach your children to

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash their hands. Teach kids to use their inner elbow if a tissue is not available.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. If soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Not share food, water bottles, utensils or cups.

More information

- [Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children \(CDC\)](#)
- [Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the Novel Coronavirus \(NPR\)](#)