

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and Children

Q: Are children more susceptible to the virus that causes COVID-19 compared with the general population and how can infection be prevented?

A: No, there is no evidence that children are more susceptible. In fact, most confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported from China have occurred in adults. Infections in children have been reported, including in very young children. From limited information published from past Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) outbreaks, infection among children was relatively uncommon.

Person-to-person spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been seen among close contacts of returned travelers from Hubei province in China. This virus is not currently spreading in the community in the United States and risk to the general public is low. Children should engage in usual preventive actions to avoid infection, including cleaning hands often using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, avoiding people who are sick, and staying up to date on vaccinations, including influenza vaccine. Additional information on prevention measures can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

Q: Does the clinical presentation of COVID-19 differ in children compared with adults?

A: Limited reports of children with COVID-19 in China have described cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose, and cough. Gastrointestinal symptoms (vomiting and diarrhea) have been reported in at least one child with COVID-19. These limited reports suggest that children with confirmed COVID-19 have generally presented with mild symptoms, and though severe complications (e.g., acute respiratory distress syndrome, septic shock) have been reported, they appear to be uncommon. More information on CDC Clinical Guidance for COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>

Q: Are children at increased risk for severe illness, morbidity, or mortality from COVID-19 infection compared with adults?

A: There have been very few reports of the clinical outcomes for children with COVID-19 to date. Limited reports from China suggest that children with confirmed COVID-19 may present with mild symptoms and though severe complications (e.g., acute respiratory distress syndrome, septic shock) have been reported, they appear to be uncommon. However, as with other respiratory illnesses, certain populations of children may be at increased risk of severe infection, such as children with underlying health conditions.

Q: Are there any treatments available for children with COVID-19?

A: There are currently no antiviral drugs recommended or licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for COVID-19. Clinical management includes prompt implementation of recommended infection prevention and control measures in healthcare settings and supportive management of complications. More information on CDC Clinical Guidance for COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>

Children and their family members should engage in usual preventive actions to prevent the spread of respiratory infections, including covering coughs, cleaning hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and staying up to date on vaccinations, including influenza.

Additional information on prevention measures can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

For information on COVID-19 and pregnancy, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>

For CDC guidance related to COVID-19 and breastfeeding, please see:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-guidance-breastfeeding.html>