



## 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.
- 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

- Consider the size of the space vs. the size of the group. Aim to have the fewest number of teenagers possible in the largest space available.
- 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.
- [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 \(NPR\)](#)