

Children, Youth and Families During COVID-19

Schools

Students in B.C. will return to in-person learning in September. In-person learning is important for a student's education, well-being and social and emotional development. New health and safety measures are in place to help keep everyone safe. These include wearing masks, hand-washing and physical distancing.

All staff, adult volunteers, visitors, and students aged 12 years and older should wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a "mask") at all times while indoors at school. The only exceptions are:

- If a person is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- If there is a barrier in place
- During eating or drinking

Students 9 - 11 are encouraged to wear a mask. Students under 9 years of age are not required to wear masks and it remains a family decision.

For more information, see:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Child Care, Schools & Camps](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: K-12 Schools and COVID-19](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: COVID-19 safe schools](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Information for Parents and Families](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: K-12 Health Check](#)
- [Government of British Columbia: Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) (PDF, 585KB)

School Exposures

As schools go back in session, you may be concerned about increased exposure to COVID-19. For information about school exposures from your local health authority, see:

- [Fraser Health: School exposures](#)
- [Interior Health: School exposures](#)
- [Island Health: Exposures in Schools](#)
- [Northern Health: COVID-19 school exposures](#)
- [Vancouver Coastal Health: VCH exposures in schools](#)

You and your child may wonder how the COVID-19 test is given. To help reduce anxiety and worry for children who must take the test, BC Children's Hospital developed an informative video. You can watch

as a Child Life Specialist shows how the test works and how children will feel when receiving it. Watch now to learn more about the [COVID-19 test for children](#). Testing for COVID-19 is recommended for anyone with cold, influenza or COVID-like symptoms, even mild symptoms. Testing is not required if you do not have symptoms. You do not need a referral or to call [8-1-1](#). [Learn more about testing and where you can get tested](#).

Maternal and Infant Health

Pregnancy

Pregnancy does not increase the risk of getting COVID-19. Pregnant women should follow the same self-isolation guidelines as everyone in the community. If you become ill during your pregnancy, you should speak with your health care provider and be tested for COVID-19.

Learn more about pregnancy and COVID-19 from:

- [BC Women's Hospital, COVID-19 Information for Patients \(Common Questions\)](#)
- [Government of Canada: Pregnancy, childbirth and caring for a newborn during COVID-19](#)

Infant Feeding

Breastfeeding is a good way to help protect your baby from becoming sick. Continue to breastfeed and hold your baby skin-to-skin often. Washing your hands often can help keep your baby from getting sick. To be extra safe, wear a mask when breastfeeding if you are feeling unwell. If you are using a breast pump, thoroughly wash all parts of your pump and feeding equipment each time. If you are supplementing or exclusively using formula, have enough formula on hand to last you two weeks.

To learn more about infant feeding during COVID-19, see:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Babies](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Breastfeeding and COVID-19](#) (PDF, 590KB)
- [Perinatal Services BC: COVID-19 and Breastfeeding Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF, 89KB)
- [Perinatal Services BC: COVID-19 and Infant Formula Feeding Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF, 139K)

Parenting During COVID-19

Parenting during the pandemic offers unique challenges. Children may be bored and miss friends. Some are no longer in childcare or school. You may have additional concerns about your children's physical and mental health.

Positive Parenting During a Pandemic

Children and youth may need extra support to cope with being away from friends and not being able to participate in their usual activities. Learn about how we can talk to children and youth about the pandemic.

- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Helping children and teens cope with stressful public events](#)

- [Canadian Paediatric Society: How can we talk to kids about COVID-19? Be "realistically reassuring"](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Parenting during COVID-19: A new frontier](#)
- [Child Health BC: A message to parents & caregivers during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (PDF, 351KB)
- [Media Smarts: Helping kids stay in touch while social distancing](#)
- [Media Smarts: Social media and screen time during a pandemic](#)

Resources for Adolescents and their Parents

Learn about how you can support your teen during the pandemic.

- [Canadian Paediatric Society: COVID, youth, and substance use: Critical messages for youth and families](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Tips and tricks to help adolescents cope during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Kids Help Phone: We're here for you during COVID-19](#)

Promoting Mental Health for Children and Youth

Physical distancing requirements and isolation can affect mental health for children and youth. Find resources for supporting children.

- [Canadian Paediatric Society: How to help youth tackle the blues during COVID-19 and #physicaldistancing](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Supporting youth with anxiety disorders during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: The CARD System for Coping with fears and anxiety](#)
- [Inter-Agency Standing Committee: My Hero is You: How kids can fight COVID-19!](#)
- [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 in Children

Children generally have milder symptoms of COVID-19 than adults. For information on the effect of COVID-19 on children and how to keep them safe, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: COVID-19 and Children](#).

Rashes and inflammatory reactions

Children have also been reported to experience rashes or skin lesions or an inflammatory response several weeks after infection with COVID-19. "COVID toes", also known as chilblain-like lesions, are one of several skin lesions seen with COVID-19. These skin lesions seem to be a specific rash. They are usually seen in children or young adults and not associated with severe disease.

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C)

Multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) is a newly recognized clinical syndrome in children and adolescents. MIS-C appears to be caused by an exaggerated immune response, leading to severe widespread inflammation. Different parts of the body can become inflamed, including the heart, gastrointestinal system, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes and lymph nodes. It can be serious and even deadly, but most children get better with medical care.

For more information on rashes and inflammatory reactions, see:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Rashes and inflammatory reactions](#)

Children with Special Health Needs

You may have additional concerns if your children have special health needs.

- [Autism Speaks: COVID-19 information & resources for families](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Children with immune compromises](#)
- [BC's Children's Hospital: Inhaler dose tracking sheet \(PDF. 129KB\)](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Paediatric asthma and COVID-19](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Type 1 diabetes and COVID-19: Going back to school](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: When your child has ADHD: Coping during a Pandemic](#)
- [SickKids: Supporting your child with a neurodevelopmental disorder through the COVID-19 crisis](#)

Safety

Learn more about preventing injuries during the pandemic.

- [Injury Prevention During COVID-19](#)
- [Canadian Paediatric Society: Preventing home injuries in the time of COVID-19](#)

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The information provided above has been adapted from the [BC Centre for Disease Control: Testing Information page](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: Rashes and inflammatory reactions page](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: Babies page](#), [BC Women's Hospital, COVID-19 Information for Patients \(Common Questions\) page](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: K-12 Schools and COVID-19](#) and the [BC Centre for Disease Control: COVID-19 Testing for Children and Youth](#) page accessed August, 2021

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.