

COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is COVID-19 and what are the symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by a new strain of Coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. Many people believe that COVID-19 is similar to Influenza, and while both are contagious respiratory illnesses, they are caused by different viruses and there are some key differences between the two infections. COVID-19 seems to spread more easily than influenza and can cause more serious illness in some people. In general, COVID-19 still seems to cause mild to moderate symptoms in children, but children can still have serious complications from COVID-19.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can include any of the following:

- Fever
- Chills
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of taste
- Loss of smell

It is important to note that ANY of these symptoms can occur when someone has COVID-19, and it is not necessary to have all or even several of these conditions to be positive.

How can we prevent the spread of COVID-19?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends the following practices to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19:

- Stay at least 6 feet apart from other people. (“social distancing”)
 - Maintain 6 feet separation **from anyone outside your home**, but also people inside your home who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and *wash your hands*.
- When in public, wear a mask over your nose and mouth. *Masks should always be worn outdoors whenever you are interacting with those outside your household!*
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth. If you do, wash your hands afterwards.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

- This includes things such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - Monitor your health every day, watching for symptoms like fever, cough, shortness of breath, or even runny nose, congestion, diarrhea, body aches and headaches. If you develop symptoms, talk to your doctor.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Singing the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end **twice** will take you about 20 seconds!
- Take care of yourself! Eat well-balanced meals, drink plenty of water, and get adequate sleep to help maintain a healthy body.

Do I need to wear a mask?

Yes! The CDC recommends that everyone wear a mask when in public or at events or gatherings in which you will be around other people. Masks should be worn anytime you are outside interacting with *anyone* outside of your household. Masks help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Things to consider when wearing a mask:

- Wash your hands before putting on your mask
- Avoid touching your mask while wearing it
- Wear masks with **2 or more layers**
- Wear the mask over your mouth **AND** nose and secure it under your chin.
- Masks with exhalation valves or vents are **NOT RECOMMENDED** as these masks allow virus particles to escape
- N95 Respirators are not recommended
- “Gaiters” should have two layers, or be folded to make two layers
- The effectiveness of face shields alone is unknown, therefore, these are not recommended at this time
- Visit this section of the CDC website for more information about wearing a mask: [CDC: Use Masks to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/faq-use-masks-to-help-slow-the-spread-of-covid-19)

Should I be tested for COVID-19 and what types of tests are available?

There are two main categories of tests for COVID-19 – viral tests and antibody tests. Viral tests tell you if you have a current infection. An antibody test *might* tell you if you had a past infection.

Regarding viral tests, we recommend a molecular test called the SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. This test is designed to detect the molecular RNA of the COVID-19 virus in a respiratory specimen from the nasopharynx.

Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current COVID-19 infection. The main uses for antibody testing are vaccine research and the evaluation of Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome (MIS-C). See below for more information about MIS-C.

Montgomery Pediatrics, in accordance with the CDC, recommends that the following people should consider being tested for COVID-19:

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19 (see above)
- People who have had close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19. *Close Contact* is defined as within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes within a 24 hour period.
- People who have partaken in activities that put them at higher risk because they cannot socially distance (such as travel, large gatherings, or crowded indoor settings).

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19, we recommend you schedule a visit with one of our doctors to discuss whether testing is indicated. We are currently conducting many of these visits via telehealth, but in some cases, may need to see the child in person.

What type of testing is available at Montgomery Pediatrics?

At Montgomery Pediatrics, we offer testing for the SARS-CoV-2 PCR through Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Medical Center (CCHMC). We do **not** offer the *rapid antigen* test as this test is not as accurate and only helpful if positive. We have a limited number of PCR tests available in our office that are reserved for special situations.

For most patients, testing will be done at the CCHMC neighborhood locations. If your doctor determines that your child needs to be tested, he or she will send an

order to Cincinnati Children's. You will then call the *COVID-19 Scheduling Center* at **513-517-2670** to schedule an appointment for your child's test. The Scheduling Center will work with you to determine the most convenient time and place for testing. Testing is done by appointment only, and appointments are available 6-7 days per week. The testing is done at drive-through sites, and symptomatic patients will remain in their car for the test. Please note – unless your child is acutely ill and in need of immediate medical attention, it is **not** recommended that you go to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care for COVID testing.

What is the turnaround time for test results?

The turnaround time for results is currently **24-48 hours**. Our office will notify you with results, whether they are negative or positive. *We encourage patients to sign up for our Patient Portal as this is an effective, and often quicker, way to receive results. Click [here](#) to register for portal.* You can also view your child's results on MyChart through Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

What's the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others. Quarantine means staying at home and not leaving the house for any reason. This includes trips to the grocery store, the gas station, the drug store, etc. If you are required to quarantine, even *short* trips out of the house should not occur and will put others in the community at risk.

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their own home. A person who is infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, should **isolate** if at all possible, not just quarantine. This means staying in a separate room or area in the house (a "sick room" or "sick area") and using a separate bathroom if available. Individuals who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 and **do not** have any symptoms should still **isolate** at home if possible.

Obviously, isolation can be challenging or even impossible in certain cases in the pediatric population. In situations where your child is too young to isolate, or has special needs that would prohibit isolation, we recommend the child try to isolate with one parent or family member as much as possible.

Who needs to QUARANTINE and for how long?

Anyone who has been in **close contact** with someone who has COVID-19 should quarantine (**stay home**) for **14 days** after your **last day** of close contact with that person.

- Exception: anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 3 months *and remains asymptomatic*. If you have had COVID-19 in the past 3 months, and you have a close contact exposure, you do not need to quarantine **unless** you develop symptoms.
- What counts as a **close contact**?
 - You were within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for more than 15 minutes in a 24 hour period
 - You were caring for someone at home who is sick with COVID-19
 - You were hugging or kissing someone who tested positive
 - You shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who tested positive
 - The COVID-positive person sneezed or coughed on you
- It is important to note that the quarantine period is 14 days from the **last day of close contact**. Therefore, if you *continue* to have close contact with that positive person, your 14 day quarantine will continue to be pushed back until your last day of exposure.

Is it possible to shorten the 14 day quarantine?

Yes, there are new guidelines from the CDC that make it possible to shorten the 14-day quarantine. ***It is important to note that the CDC and Montgomery Pediatrics still endorse a 14-day quarantine as the safest way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.*** However, in an effort to balance reducing the burden of the quarantine with the small possibility of spreading the virus, the CDC has come up with these two options to reduce the quarantine time:

- Ending the quarantine after 10 days without testing *if you remain asymptomatic*
- Ending the quarantine after 7 days if you have a negative test result on day 5 or later, *and you remain asymptomatic*

It is important to note that you must remain asymptomatic to end your quarantine early. If you do end your quarantine early, you must still monitor for symptoms until 14 days after your exposure. If you develop symptoms at any time during the 14 days, you should immediately self-isolate and call your doctor.

Finally, if you end your quarantine early, you must still wear a mask in public, maintain a 6 feet distance from others, wash your hands frequently, and avoid crowds.

Who needs to ISOLATE and for how long?

Anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, *whether they have symptoms or not*, should isolate at home.

- If you test positive and you have symptoms, you should isolate for **10 days** from the day your symptoms started.
- If you test positive and you do not have symptoms, you should isolate for **10 days** from the day you tested positive. However, if you develop symptoms during that time, you should isolate for 10 days from the day your symptoms started.

Isolation is necessary to separate people who are infected with COVID-19 from people who are not infected. Isolation means staying in a separate room or area in the house (a “sick room” or “sick area”) and using a separate bathroom if available. If isolation is not possible, you should at least remain at home, avoid contact with other members of the household and pets, do not share personal household items (cups, utensils, towels, etc.), and wear a mask when around other people in the house.

What is MIS-C?

MIS-C stands for Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children. It is a rare, but serious, condition associated with COVID-19 that can cause inflammation in multiple organ systems in the body including, but not limited to, the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, and gastrointestinal system. Children with MIS-C will typically have a fever, abdominal pain with vomiting or diarrhea, a rash, possibly respiratory symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath, and possibly altered mental status like confusion or excessive sleepiness. It is important to note that this condition is still quite rare in the pediatric population. If you are concerned about MIS-C, you should call your pediatrician immediately to determine if your child needs to be seen in the office, or if a more emergent evaluation in the emergency room is necessary.

If my child had COVID-19, does he or she need to be cleared by a doctor to return to sports?

Yes. COVID-19 can have serious effects on the cardiovascular system, specifically a condition called myocarditis. Myocarditis is a condition in which there is inflammation of the heart muscle, and it is a known cause of sudden death during exercise in young athletes. Therefore, the American College of Cardiology and The Heart Institute at Cincinnati Children's Hospital and Medical Center recommend that pediatric patients who have had COVID-19 should be evaluated by a medical provider prior to returning to sports participation.

At a minimum, children should be ***asymptomatic for at least 2 weeks*** before considering return-to-play. At Montgomery Pediatrics, Inc. we recommend you schedule your appointment for return-to-play clearance after your child has been asymptomatic for 2 weeks. Depending on the age of your child, the severity of their illness, and the type of physical activity or sport they are engaging in, a consultation with a Pediatric Cardiologist may also be required.

Should I travel during the pandemic?

In most cases, Montgomery Pediatrics Inc., in accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC), does not recommend traveling during the pandemic unless absolutely necessary. Travel can increase your chance getting and spreading COVID-19. Postponing travel and staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. It is important to remember that you can still spread disease, especially COVID-19, to others even if you are feeling well and do not have any symptoms. We recommend reviewing the CDC website for more detailed information regarding travel.