



PHOENIX
CHILDREN'S

COVID-19

Inflammatory Bowel Disease & COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a novel strain of coronavirus identified at the end of 2019 that is highly infectious and ranges in severity from asymptomatic to severe.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs and can infect people in close contact (within 6 feet). The virus can live on surfaces, so touching contaminated surfaces before touching your eyes, nose, and mouth may also lead to infection. There have been concerns that COVID-19 may be in the stool.

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 infection can present with a variety of signs and symptoms. In children, there may not be any significant symptoms. The most commonly reported symptoms in adults are:

- > Fever
- > Fatigue
- > Cough
- > Diarrhea
- > Muscle aches
- > Abdominal pain
- > Shortness of breath

Is my child at high-risk for developing COVID-19?

It is important to note that children are not considered a high-risk group at this time. Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) are also not considered a high-risk group. However, if your child is on specific medications that lower the immune system, or if they are experiencing active malnutrition, they may be considered a higher-risk.



Is my child on an immunosuppressant?

Common immunosuppressants used to treat IBD include the following:

- › Steroids – prednisone, prednisolone, entocort, uceris
- › Azothiaprine (Imuran)
- › Biologics/biosimilars – Remicade, Humira, Stelara, Entyvio, Cimzia
- › Methotrexate
- › Mercaptopurine (6MP)

What are the current recommendations for IBD patients related to COVID-19?

IBD occurs as a result of an overly active immune system. Therefore, many of the medications used to treat your child's IBD suppress the immune system. Some parents have asked if their child should stop their medications. We do not advocate stopping medications as this could lead to an IBD flare. It is best for your child to keep taking their medications to decrease their risk of exposure due to an IBD-related hospitalization. Furthermore, many of your child's medications may take months to leave the body and will therefore not help your child by stopping them in the short term, and in turn lead to worsening of IBD in the long-term. If your child is on a corticosteroid (i.e. prednisone), contact your child's gastroenterologist to discuss whether it is appropriate to stop treatment sooner. Do NOT delay your child's biologic. As always, if your child is experiencing signs of an infection please contact your child's gastroenterologist for further guidance before receiving his or her infusion or injection.

How can I continue to protect my child from COVID-19?

It is important for your child to follow your local health department's guidelines. Children who are at an increased risk (i.e. immunosuppression, malnutrition) should be especially diligent with these guidelines (i.e. social distancing). However, it is beneficial to have extra medications, extra medical supplies or equipment, and sufficient over-the-counter medications for treatment of fever and other symptoms if they arise. As always, we recommend children with IBD to avoid NSAIDS (i.e. ibuprofen, Motrin, Advil, Naproxen, Aleve, etc.) as these may trigger an IBD flare. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is safe for fever and pain control. Contact your child's pediatrician and gastroenterologist if he or she develops symptoms of COVID-19.

Encourage your child to practice strict adherence to the following:

- › Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- › Do not touch your nose, eyes, and mouth if you have not washed your hands
- › Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (sing Happy Birthday twice)
- › Disinfect surfaces prior to eating (the virus survives longer on surfaces)
- › Call your child's pediatrician and gastroenterologist if your child experiences fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
- › Follow your local health department's guidelines regarding social distancing, traveling, wearing of cloth face coverings, handling of deliveries, and gathering in groups
- › Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol when soap is not available

How can I help my child during quarantine?

It is helpful to maintain a schedule during quarantine. Encourage your child to wake up at a scheduled time, get ready for the day, and designate a location for school work to help separate work from play. Mindfulness, meditation, exercise, and adequate sleep are also helpful. Consider practicing meditation, mindfulness, and yoga with your child. Encourage your child to spend time outside every day while maintaining social distancing. Parents – it is okay to take time for yourself. Remember that you cannot drink from an empty cup and that your health should also be priority!

Yoga to Stay Active

1. **10 Yoga Poses for Instant Energy - FIT from WebMD:**
<http://fit.webmd.com/teen/move/slideshow/slideshow-yoga-for-energy>
2. **School-Age Kid-Friendly Yoga and Mindfulness:** <https://adventuresofsuperstretch.com>
3. **Yoga and Meditation on YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>

Mindfulness Apps

1. **HeadSpace:** <https://www.headspace.com>
2. **Breathe2Relax:** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246>
3. **OMG. I Can Meditate:** <https://apps.apple.com/us/developer/omg-i-can-meditate-inc/id920161005>

For Parents: How do I talk with my child or teen about COVID-19?

1. **NPR - Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Corona Virus:**
https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?_sm_au=iVV0H2VJZ3235MqPqL4VHKH84sBqF
2. **Psychology Today - How to Talk to Your Kids about COVID-19:**
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/hope-resilience/202003/how-talk-your-kids-about-covid-19>
3. **NY Times - Talking to Teens/Tweens about Corona Virus:**
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/02/well/family/coronavirus-teenagers-anxiety.html?_sm_au=iVV0H2VJZ3235MqPqL4VHKH84sBqF

For more information, please visit one of following trusted websites:

1. **Crohn's and Colitis Foundation:** <https://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/coronavirus-update/pediatrics>
2. **Centers for Disease Control:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
3. **World Health Organization:**
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>