

# COVID-19 INFECTION AMONG CHILDREN

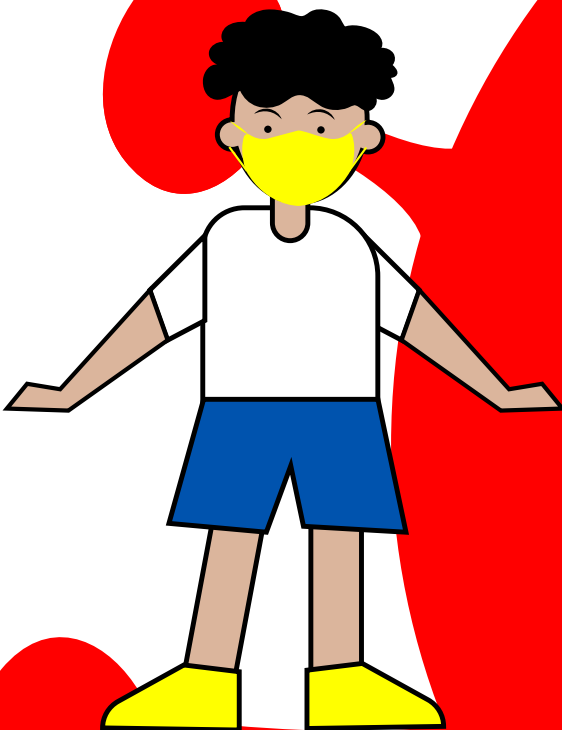
Currently, the whole world including India is facing the gravest humanitarian crises in the form of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

## CHILDREN AND COVID-19

Children have unique needs and these often get overlooked in emergencies. As far as COVID-19 infection is concerned we should remember that children of all ages are vulnerable to the infection. **It has been observed that as compared to adults the rate of infection among children is low but they are still the most vulnerable population group.**




Globally it has been found that most children who are infected with COVID-19 do not become as sick as adults. **According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India children are less commonly affected with COVID-19 infection, and a majority of them are asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic.**

Government of India records suggest that 2 in every 10 COVID-19 infected children may need hospitalisation for treatment.



# Symptoms of COVID-19

While children infected with COVID-19 are less likely to develop severe illness compared with adults, children are still at risk of developing severe illness and complications from COVID-19.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19	Other symptoms that are less common	Symptoms of severe COVID-19	Other less common symptoms of severe COVID-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loss of taste or smell</li> <li>Nasal congestion</li> <li>Conjunctivitis (also known as red eyes)</li> <li>Sore throat</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Muscle or joint pain</li> <li>Different types of skin rash</li> <li>Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>Diarrhoea</li> <li>Stomach ache</li> <li>Chills or dizziness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortness of breath</li> <li>Loss of appetite</li> <li>Confusion</li> <li>Persistent pain or pressure in the chest</li> <li>High temperature (above 38°C/ 100.4° F)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irritability</li> <li>Confusion</li> <li>Reduced consciousness (sometimes associated with seizures)</li> <li>Anxiety</li> <li>Depression</li> <li>Sleep disorders</li> <li>More severe and rare neurological complications such as strokes, brain inflammation, delirium, and nerve damage</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dry cough</li> </ul> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatigue</li> </ul> 			

Source: The World Health Organisation

## Management of children with COVID-19 infection

Children with COVID-19 infection may be asymptomatic, mildly symptomatic, moderately sick, or severely ill.

Severity	Symptoms	Action to be taken	Home Monitoring	Food and Diet
<b>Asymptomatic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually identified while screening, if family members are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inform your nearest health facility or ASHA or ANM if any of the family members tested positive for COVID-19</li> <li>For Cough: Warm saline gargles (in older children and adolescents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not require any treatment except monitoring for development of symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluids &amp; feeds: Sufficient oral fluids to maintain hydration</li> <li>Diet: Nutritious diet (Fresh fruits &amp; Vegetables)</li> </ul>
<b>Mild COVID-19 disease</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fever</li> <li>Sore throat</li> <li>Rhinorrhea (runny nose)</li> <li>Cough with no breathing difficulty</li> <li>Stomach ache, diarrhea, vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediately get in touch with your nearest health facility/ASHA/ ANM and follow the advice</li> <li>In case there is a lack of proper arrangement to manage these children at home or access to a health facility is difficult, the child may be admitted to hospital</li> <li>For Cough: Warm saline gargles (in older children and adolescents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Such children do not need any investigations and can be managed at home with home isolation and symptomatic treatment</li> <li>Maintain a monitoring chart including                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counting of respiratory rates 2-3 times a day when the child is not crying</li> <li>Oxygen saturation level</li> </ul> </li> <li>Communicate health condition to the doctor or health care worker regularly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluids &amp; feeds: Sufficient oral fluids to maintain hydration</li> <li>Diet: Nutritious diet (Fresh fruits &amp; Vegetables)</li> </ul>

Severity	Symptoms	Action to be taken
Moderate COVID-19 disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Oxygen saturations above 90%</li> <li>• Rapid respiration</li> <li>• Grunting (noisy breathing sound)</li> <li>• Severe retraction of the chest</li> <li>• Severe diarrhoea or vomiting leading to loss of body fluid</li> <li>• Thready and rapid pulse</li> <li>• Bluish discolouration of lips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child should be admitted to dedicated COVID-19 Health Centre/District Hospital/Community Health Centre (CHC)/Primary Health Centre (PHC)</li> </ul>
Severe COVID-19 disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Cough</li> <li>• Oxygen saturations less than 90%</li> <li>• Grunting (noisy breathing sound)</li> <li>• Severe retraction of the chest</li> <li>• Lethargy</li> <li>• Somnolence (sleepiness" or "drowsiness)</li> <li>• Seizure</li> <li>• Severe diarrhoea or vomiting leading to loss of body fluid</li> <li>• Thready and rapid pulse</li> <li>• Bluish discolouration of lips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The child should be admitted to dedicated COVID-19 Health Centre/District Hospital/Community Health Centre (CHC)/Primary Health Centre (PHC)</li> </ul>

Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

## Danger Signs of COVID-19 infection among Children



1. Difficulty in Breathing



2. Persistent Fever/ High-grade fever



3. Recurrence of Fever after Remission



4. Palpitations



5. Chest pain/ Chest tightness



6. Severe Cough



7. Severe diarrhoea or vomiting leading to loss of body fluid



8. Thready and rapid pulse



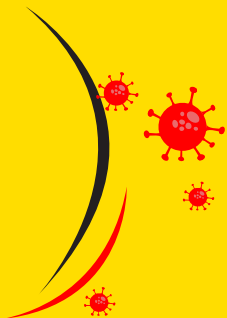
9. Bluish discolouration of lips



10. Any new onset symptoms

## How to Take Care of an Infected Household Member

- The infected person should stay in a **specific room** or in a **designated area** and be separated from other household members especially children and the elderly as much as possible
- **Avoid sharing household items like eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels, bedding** with the infected person
- **Wash cloths of the infected person regularly** in warm water and soap, dry in sun
- **Only one member should be assigned** to take care of the infected person
- **Close contact of the infected person with children** and other family members must be avoided
- **Wear a triple-layered mask** all the time when in contact with an infected person
- Disposable masks are never to be reused
- Place all used gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing them off with other household waste

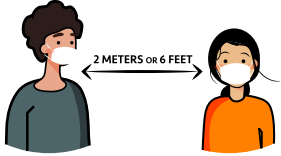


# Safe and Healthy Practices to be Followed



Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for 20 secs or sanitize hands with 70% alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Wear a mask when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider's clinic



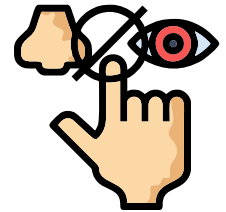
Practice at least 2-meter or 6 feet distance between yourself and others

Avoid going to crowded places



Avoid organising and attending events, prayers, parties, sabhas, rallies, etc.

Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth especially when you are outside your home or in close contact with any infected person



Drink sufficient water and fluids

Eat healthy to maintain immunity



Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or any other cloth when you cough or sneeze

Stay in touch with ANM/ASHA/Anganwadi Worker and follow their advice



**Note: In case of emergencies and any support for children please call,**

**Nearest Health Facility**

**(PHC/CHC/District Hospital)**

or

**CHILDLINE 1098**

or

**HELPLINE FOR CHILDREN 1800 102 7222**