

# COVID-19 Prevention Strategies for K-12 and Child Care Settings

August 2023



## Stay Up to Date on Vaccinations, Including Those for COVID-19

Staying up to date on routine vaccinations is essential to prevent illness from many different infections. COVID-19 vaccination helps protect eligible people from getting severely ill with COVID-19. High COVID-19 vaccination coverage reduces the burden of COVID-19 on people, schools, healthcare systems, and communities.



Schools, child care settings, and health departments can promote vaccination in many ways, including:

- Provide information about COVID-19 vaccines and other recommended vaccines.
- Encourage trust and confidence in COVID-19 vaccines
- Establish supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated easy and convenient, such as a workplace vaccination program, providing paid time off for individuals to get vaccinated, or assisting family members receiving vaccinations.
- Make vaccinations available on-site by hosting school-located vaccination clinics, or connect eligible children, students, teachers, staff, and families to off-site vaccination locations.



For more information on child care and school vaccinations in Montana, visit [dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/immunization/childcareandschoolresources](https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/immunization/childcareandschoolresources)

## Stay Home When Sick

Staying home when sick can lower the risk of spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19, to other people. People who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections, such as cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea, should stay home. Testing is recommended for people with symptoms of COVID-19 as soon as possible after symptoms begin.



Recommendations for Students:

- Schools should provide excused absences for students who are sick
- Avoid policies that incentivize coming to school while sick
- Support children who are learning at home if they are sick.



Recommendations for Staff:

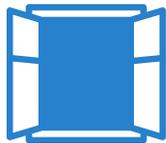
- Schools and child care programs should allow flexible, non-punitive, and supportive paid sick leave policies and practices.
- These policies should support workers caring for a sick family member and encourage sick workers to stay home without fear of retaliation, loss of pay, loss of employment, or other negative impacts.

For information on staying home when sick with COVID-19, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html>



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## Improve Ventilation to Ensure Good Indoor Air Quality

Schools and child care programs can optimize ventilation and maintain improvements to indoor air quality to reduce the risk of germs and contaminants spreading through the air. Follow [EPA recommendations](#) for improving indoor air quality to reduce the risk of airborne spread of viruses and other contaminants.



When [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) increase or there is an outbreak, schools and child care programs can take additional steps to increase outdoor air intake and improve air filtration in the following ways:

- Safely opening windows and doors, including on school buses and child care transportation vehicles
- Using portable air cleaners with HEPA filters
- Hold some activities outside if feasible

Funds provided through the [U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) Programs](#) and the [Governor's Emergency Education Relief \(GEER\) Programs](#) and the [Department of Health and Human Services' Head Start and Child Care American Rescue Plan](#) can support for improvements to ventilation, repairs, upgrades, replacements in HVAC systems, MERV-13 air filters, and portable air cleaners.

## Encourage Good Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette



Schools and child care programs should teach and reinforce proper handwashing to lower the risk of spreading viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19. Schools and child care programs should provide adequate handwashing supplies. If washing hands isn't possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be provided. Hand sanitizers should be stored up, away, and out of sight of younger children and should be used with adult supervision for children ages 5 years and younger.

Schools and child care programs should teach and reinforce covering coughs and sneezes to help keep individuals from getting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

## Clean Surfaces Regularly



Schools and child care programs should clean surfaces at least once a day to reduce the risk of germs spreading by touching surfaces. Additionally, child care programs should follow recommended procedures for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection in their setting such as after diapering, feeding, and exposure to bodily fluids.

For more information, visit

[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)



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## 5 Steps To Reduce COVID-19 Transmission This School Year

VACCINATE

STAY HOME  
WHEN SICK

PRACTICE GOOD  
HAND HYGIENE AND  
RESPIRATORY  
ETIQUETTE

VENTILATE

CLEAN

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## If You Have Been Exposed to Someone with COVID-19

- \***Wear a mask** for 10 full days as soon as you find out that you were exposed
  - \*\*Wear your mask any time you are around others inside your home or indoors in public, including at school.
- \*Take extra precautions if you will be around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19
- \***Watch for symptoms of COVID-19**, including: fever (100.4F or greater), cough, shortness of breath
  - \*\*If you develop symptoms, isolate immediately, get tested, and stay home until you know your test result
- \***Get tested** at least 5 full days after your exposure.
  - \*\*If you test negative, continue taking your masking precautions through day 10
  - \*\*If you test positive, isolate immediately.



## Additional Resources

- CDC: [What to Do if You Are Exposed](#)
- CDC: [What to Do if You Test Positive](#)
- MTDPHHS: [School Vaccination Resources](#)



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## If You Test Positive for COVID-19

- \*[Begin isolation](#) immediately and [notify your school](#) that you tested positive
- \*Identify any close contacts you might have exposed and notify the school if they're students or staff so they can follow exposure recommendations
- \*[Report](#) your positive test result to the health department by using the link or the QR code located below
- \*[Stay home](#) for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home.
- \*Wear a high-quality mask for 10 full days if you must be around others at home or in public.

	If You Have Symptoms	If You Had NO Symptoms
Start of Isolation (Day 0)	Day of symptom onset	Day you tested positive (Note: if you develop symptoms within 10 days, isolation restarts to day 0 on the day of symptom onset)
End of Isolation	After day 5 of isolation if you are fever free for 24 hours and symptoms are improving	After day 5 of isolation
End of Mask Usage	10 days after isolation began, or before day 10 with two sequential negative tests taken 48 hours apart.	10 days after isolation began, or before day 10 with two sequential negative tests taken 48 hours apart.

Report Your Positive COVID-19 Test Result Here

[tinyurl.com/hometestmt](https://tinyurl.com/hometestmt)

-or-

Scan the Following QR Code



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## Wash Your Hands

1

Wet Your Hands with Clean Water



2

Get Soap



3

Scrub for 20 Seconds

\*hint: hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end two times



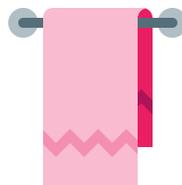
4

Rinse Your Hands with Clean Water



5

Dry Your Hands



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## Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. You can also cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands!



You may be asked to wear a mask to help protect others.

## Make Sure to Clean Your Hands After Coughing or Sneezing!

