

Last Updated 28 December 2021

What do I do if my child contracts COVID-19?

Important information

If your child is displaying any of the following symptoms or signs, please call Triple 0 (000)

- Difficult, or fast breathing
- Pale or mottled skin colour
- Excessive drowsiness or confusion
- Persistent fever higher than 38 degrees Celsius, which does not reduce after giving paracetamol or ibuprofen
- Poor fluid intake, or reduced frequency of feeds (for infants)
- Reduced urine or wet nappies
- Chest pain
- Severe or worsening abdominal pain
- Frequent vomiting and or diarrhoea
- Decreased appetite

If you need urgent medical care please do not drive yourself to the GP or hospital.

- **Call 000**
- **Inform the emergency operator that your child has COVID**
- **Ensure all family members wear a mask when the ambulance team arrive to your home.**

If you're using a mobile phone and Triple Zero (000) isn't answering, try calling 112.

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. The virus can spread from person to person.

Learn more on COVID-19 at the [SA Health website](#).

How does COVID-19 affect children?

The majority of children infected with COVID-19 only have mild symptoms. It is not uncommon for children to test positive for the virus but not show any symptoms, however they are still able to spread the virus. This means it is important to follow the advice you are given at the time of your positive result.

Most common Symptoms

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Diarrhoea and lethargy
- Loss of taste or smell

As with all viruses, your child is more at risk if they have other medical conditions such as asthma, obesity, diabetes; inflammatory bowel disease or they are immune-compromised.

Looking after my child at home

When caring for your child at home, we recommend you:

- Give your child small amounts of fluid, often. They may not feel like drinking much so may need your help and encouragement
- Offer your child food regularly
- Encourage rest
- Use paracetamol or ibuprofen only if you think your child is in pain or appears uncomfortable with fever. Do not give more than the recommended dosage and check with your medical professional if your child is taking other regular medication.

Medication at home

If you require supplies of medications, please contact your local pharmacy to arrange delivery.

What is COVIDKids?

COVIDKids is a **referral only** service that gives children, young people and their carers direct access to experienced paediatric nurses and doctors at the Women's and Children's Hospital who can provide extra support to those who need it.

COVIDkids

Most children with COVID-19 will only experience a mild illness or will have no symptoms at all and can safely remain at home without the need for medical support.

Your child may be referred to this service by SA Health's COVID Response Care Team, a Paediatric Emergency Department or the SA Ambulance Service.

Our expert COVIDKids team will virtually assess children with COVID-19 and offer support and medical advice to families in their own home.

By receiving care and treatment at home, children are able to remain in isolation and avoid the stress that can sometimes be associated with visiting a hospital.

The COVIDKids team will monitor children through either a daily or twice daily phone call or video call.

The service may recommend you bring your child for a face-to-face assessment at our dedicated COVIDKids clinic, located at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

For children in regional or rural areas, the COVIDKids team will coordinate your care with the most appropriate local service.

In uncommon cases, a child may need to be admitted to hospital and the COVIDKids team will arrange this for you and will look after your child once they are discharged from hospital.

Who can use COVIDKids?

COVIDKids is a dedicated service for children and young people with COVID-19, managed by specialist staff at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

COVIDKids is a **referral only** service and not a drop-in clinic.

Only children and young people referred to the service by the SA Health COVID Response Care Team, Paediatric Emergency Department or SA Ambulance Service will be seen at this clinic.

Experienced paediatric nurses and doctors will virtually assess children with COVID-19 and offer support and medical advice to families in their own home.

This will be done either via videoconference or over the phone.

Should the team determine these children require further assessment, they can be transferred to the dedicated COVIDKids area at WCH for a face-to-face review and follow up care.



How does the virtual service work?

If you have been referred to the virtual COVIDKids service you will be contacted and assessed by a paediatrician and an experienced paediatric nurse by videoconference or phone call.

The team will decide how often your child requires monitoring. This may be once a day over a phone call or up to twice daily with a doctor and nurse via videoconference.

You will be asked to provide an update on your child's health and wellbeing during these calls, including:

- Your child's temperature
- Breathing
- Food intake
- Water intake

Older children may be supplied with an oximeter, which is a small machine to monitor levels of oxygen in the blood. You will be shown how to use this.

How do you know this model will work?

The COVIDKids virtual service has been developed in close collaboration with our colleagues interstate who have successfully used a similar way of looking after children with COVID-19.

The Women's and Children's Health Network acknowledges the team at the Sydney Children's Health Network, in particular, for their support and guidance.

Will my child still have to go to hospital?

In uncommon cases, a child may need to be admitted to hospital and the COVIDKids team will arrange this for you. Once your child is discharged from hospital, the COVIDKids team will support you again.

If the COVIDKids team feel that your child needs to be seen in person for a medical assessment or treatment, the team will organise for your child to visit to the hospital and will coordinate their care on arrival.

How long will my child have to use the service?

Some families will be followed by COVIDKids for the duration of the time they need to be in isolation. Others may be referred back to the COVID Response Care Team service once they no longer require close monitoring.

Home isolation and COVIDKids

Any person who has tested positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate for 14 days. Most people who are clinically well will be able to safely isolate in their own home, with additional support provided if necessary.

At the time of your child's admission to COVIDKids, you will be asked about your ability to isolate with your child, your access to food and other necessities, and any household members who might be vulnerable to the illness. It is important that your child, together with their close contacts, remain in isolation until instructed otherwise.

A medical professional or Public Health Officer will clear you and your family to leave isolation. This is usually for at least 14 full days. You will be provided with a letter of clearance to formally de-isolate your child at this time.

What about other positive family members?

COVIDKids is a service only for those aged 17 years or under.

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 in South Australia will be contacted by SA Health's COVID Response Care Team, which will arrange appropriate care for each family member.

For children, that may include a referral to the COVIDKids service and adults will be referred to the appropriate healthcare pathway depending on their medical condition.

Home isolation for other household members

Please check with the SA Health website for the most up to date information.

Further Resources

General Information	SA Health COVID-19
	SA Government COVID-19
	COVID-19 Australia
	Department of Health COVID-19
Children and Coronavirus	How to speak to kids about COVID-19 vaccines https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/how-to-speak-to-kids-about-covid-19-vaccines
	Coronavirus - A Children's Book
	Information for parents, carers and children about COVID-19
	Play School - Coronavirus Special
Wellbeing in isolation	Mental Health and COVID 19
	SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line 1800 632 753. Available 8.00 am to 8.00 pm, 7 days a week.
	Kids Helpline (5-25 year olds) 1800 551 800 https://kidshelpline.com.au/
	Headspace (12-25 year olds) 1800 650 890 https://headspace.org.au/
Other contact details	SA COVID-19 Information Line 1800 253 787
	National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Translation Services	If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.