

▶ How many of the detected COVID-19 cases are in children?

As of July 1, 2020, in Tennessee, of the 51,061 cases that have been reported to date, 4,743 (9.3%) have been in children younger than 18 years. In Davidson county, 1,060 of the total 11,356 cases (9.3%) have been in children younger than 18 years.

▶ How sick are most children who get COVID-19?

Many infected children develop a mild disease. As of July 1, 2020, in Tennessee, only 39 (< 1%) of the 4,743 children with confirmed COVID-19 were reported to be hospitalized and accounted for only 1.4% of all reported COVID-19 hospitalizations.

▶ Can my child attend camp or return to daycare this summer?

If your child and other family members are not in a “high-risk” group, it is probably safe for your child to go to camp or daycare this summer, as long as they are implementing preventive actions (below) and have not been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

▶ When children go to school or daycare, how can we protect them from COVID-19?

Encourage students and staff to take everyday preventive actions like staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, wearing masks, cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, and washing hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. We also recommend that students and staff have symptom and temperature screening before entering the building.

Summer camps, daycares and schools should also implement physical distancing in classrooms, like increasing space between desks, identifying small, “family-like” groups of 4-5 people and keeping them together, and allowing students to eat meals with only their small groups. In schools, children could stay in their classroom for meals or go outside if space is available. Adults in summer camps, daycares and schools should always wear masks.

▶ When should children be suspected of having COVID-19?

Children should be suspected of having COVID-19 if they have (1) fever AND cough or shortness of breath, OR (2) cough or shortness of breath and exposure to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

If they had exposure to someone with COVID-19 also look out for less common symptoms like runny or stuffy nose, shortness of breath, or belly troubles like throwing up or diarrhea. Testing may or may not be needed for children with these less common symptoms.

▶ My child tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

Call your pediatrician. The majority of children recover well at home. As you care for your child at home, be on the lookout for any changes in their health. Call your provider if your child gets worse, has trouble breathing or seems confused. Your goal is to help your child feel more comfortable. Keep a close eye on them, watch for any signs of serious illness and make sure they drink enough liquids. Your child should stay away from others for 10 days AND until their fever and other symptoms have been gone for at least 24 hours without taking any fever-lowering medicines. Other people in your household should also stay away from others for 14 days while monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19.

High-Risk Conditions for Severe Illness from COVID-19:

- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 than other children. The overall death rate is low among children (less than 1% of those who become ill), but the long-term consequences of the disease remain unknown.

Other conditions that are less well studied but might put someone in a higher risk category can be found on the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

▶ **Someone at my child’s school or daycare tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?**

If your child spent more than 10 minutes in close proximity (within 6 feet) to the person who tested positive, their school or daycare should tell your local health department about his/her exposure. Your child should then stay at home with limited contacts with others for 14 days. Watch your child closely for signs of illness (listed below). Your child will not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless he/she starts to have symptoms. If an employer or daycare requires your child to have a COVID test, free testing can be done in the Tennessee Health Department sites (see below - where can my child be tested for COVID-19?).

If your child did not spend more than 10 minutes in close proximity to the person who tested positive, then you should watch and check carefully for signs of illness, but he/she can go back to school as usual (following all preventative measures including wearing a mask at all times).

▶ **What signs of illness should I look for in my child after someone at their school or daycare tests positive?**

Check your child’s temperature at home every morning using a thermometer. If your child has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, he/she should stay home and be tested for COVID-19 if there isn’t another clear reason for their fever. Other symptoms to ask your child about or monitor for are cough, runny or stuffy nose, shortness of breath, or belly troubles like throwing up or diarrhea. If they have any of these symptoms, keep them home from school and consider having them tested for COVID-19.

Other common reasons for cough and runny nose:

- Common cold/other viruses
- Croup
- Seasonal allergies
- Asthma

▶ **Where can my child be tested for COVID-19?**

1. The Tennessee state Department of Health offers free COVID-19 testing at drive-through and walk-in sites throughout the state, regardless of symptoms, and people of all ages (including children) can get tested. If your child is under two, call ahead to the testing center so that they can have the appropriate testing equipment ready when you arrive. Locations, contact information, appointment information, and hours of operation can be found at this website: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/remote-assessment-sites.html>
2. Ask your pediatrician’s office if your child can be tested there.
3. If your child receives care at Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, he/she can be tested for COVID-19 if he/she has (1) fever AND respiratory symptoms, OR (2) respiratory symptoms AND exposure to someone with COVID-19 OR (3) if they have a specific procedure, treatment or admission planned at the children’s hospital. Because of limited testing availability, COVID-19 testing at VUMC is limited to these children only.

If your child cannot be tested for COVID-19 at your pediatrician’s office, they can be tested at one of the Health Department’s free testing centers.

Comparison of State Health Department Testing and Vanderbilt University Medical Center Testing

State Health Department Testing Sites

- Testing for all ages
- Testing available for anyone, regardless of symptoms

Vanderbilt University Medical Center Testing Sites

- Testing for all ages
- Testing available for children with select indications:
 1. Fever AND respiratory symptoms
 2. Respiratory symptoms AND exposure to someone with COVID-19
 3. Specific procedure, treatment or admission planned at the children’s hospital.

Last updated July 21, 2020. This guidance is based on current recommendations in a time of rapidly changing information. Check with your pediatrician and the local/state health departments for the most up-to-date information.