

COVID-19 Checklist for Families of CYSHCN

Top 5 Things You Can Do to Prepare for COVID-19

Families of children and youth with special healthcare needs (CYSHCN), including those with complex medical conditions, may be reassured that children seem to have less severe illness than older adults. They can have mild to moderate illness and even carry the virus without having symptoms. Here are a few commonsense preparations that will help keep your family stable and healthy.

1. Follow the CDC guidelines for all families.
 - a. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer. Look for one that is 60% or higher alcohol-based.
 - b. Keep your kids (CYSHCNs and siblings) away from others who are sick or keep them home if they are ill. During school closure, limit playdates, sleepovers and, for adolescents, just hanging out with friends. Try to maintain a daily routine.
 - c. Clean and disinfect your home as usual using regular household cleaning sprays or wipes. Remember to frequently clean high touch areas like doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles and TV remotes.
 - d. Frequently clean and disinfect durable medical equipment (DME), assistive technology and adaptive equipment.
2. Stock up on medications, special formulas and other supplies.
 - a. You may need to contact your physician for extra medications or consider changing to a mail-order pharmacy to get more than a month's supply. Try to keep a 90 day supply of each medication on hand.
 - b. Keep your family emergency preparedness kit well-stocked, including food, water and household supplies. If you have a Go-bag (such as emergency kits for tracheostomies or G-tubes), make sure it is complete with back-up supplies.
 - c. If your child has asthma, make sure you have extra inhalers or nebulizer medications and follow your asthma plan for both daily and rescue treatments.
3. Stay home as much as you can, delay therapies and cancel elective procedures.
 - a. Keep children with cold symptoms like runny nose or cough isolated from those without symptoms, particularly from children with complex medical conditions.
 - b. Consider alternate ways to communicate with home visitors, therapists, and other healthcare workers, such as video chats, patient electronic portals, or phone check-ins.
 - c. If your child must go out, there is no need to wear a face mask unless there are symptoms of illness.
4. Develop a plan for back-up care-givers if family members or guardians become ill.
 - a. Try to assure that children are cared for by people they know so there are less separations from familiar care-givers.
 - b. If service animals are in the house, make sure that the children and animals can stay together.

5. Be aware that home nurses and other healthcare workers are at higher risk for illness because of regular exposure. They may need to take extra precautions when caring for your child and may need to stay away if they have any respiratory symptoms. Absences and changes in schedule place extra stress on your family but protect your child.

Please do not go to the emergency department, urgent care or medical home to obtain a test. If you believe that your child needs to be evaluated because of symptoms of illness, call your pediatrician in advance to make sure that the office or clinic is prepared to safely care for your child.