

LA County Department of Health Services - Medical Hubs Information on COVID-19 for Foster Parents and Guardians

WHAT is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus that causes symptoms like fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Sometimes it can lead to more serious infections like pneumonia and may require hospitalizations, which are more common in the elderly and those with other health problems. Fortunately, most people will get better without any serious complications.

How does it spread?

- Through **droplets** when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- Through close **personal contact**, such as caring for an infected person.
- By touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

PROTECTION: What can I do to protect myself and my family?

- The best way to protect against droplets is to **cover your cough** and sneeze.
- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, or touching surfaces. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces using regular household cleaners.
- **Practice social distancing** – stay home as much as possible, avoid public places, and limit contact with people who are sick

Are the symptoms different in children?

Most of the time, children have milder symptoms than adults. The illness may look similar to the common cold, and can usually be safely managed at home. Children with chronic medical conditions affecting the heart, lungs or immune system may have more severe complications, and should contact their doctor for guidance.

Does my foster child need testing?

Testing is currently limited, and most children with mild symptoms do not need testing. Currently, testing is reserved for those who are very ill and require hospitalization. This may change as testing becomes more available, so ask your doctor if you have questions.

What can I do if my foster child is sick?

For mild illness, there is currently no specific treatment for coronavirus. Most children will get better with rest and home care, so there is no need to see a doctor. Children should remain at home until at least 72 hours after symptoms have resolved without the use medications for fever or cough and it has been at least 7 days since symptoms first appeared.

If your child has difficulty breathing, cannot keep fluids down, or appears very sick, call your medical provider or call 911.

Where else can I get information?

- **Hub COVID-19 Warm-line: (323) 409-3090 (for foster youth, DCFS workers, resource families and providers)**

- Los Angeles County Public Health www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov