

Helping your Child Grow

Parental Support Guide for Child Health
Featuring: Back to School Guide during COVID-19

September 2020



Back to School during COVID-19

The protection of children and youth are extremely important as the school year commences. Safety measures taken by schools, staff and students can prevent the potential entry, spread and control of COVID-19.

Understanding the facts about COVID-19 and how to prevent the spread can help reduce students' anxieties around the disease. This guidance provides clear, actionable support to stay safe and help your children make an easier transition back to school.



What is COVID-19?

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. It is transmitted through direct contact with respiratory droplets from an infected person and from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus.



Symptoms of COVID-19

Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. These symptoms can be very similar to those of the flu or common cold, which are far more common.

Monitor Your Child's Health

If your child is experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19, keep them home from school and notify the school of your child's absence and symptoms. Advise your family doctor or health provider of the symptoms and take your child into a health facility only if advised.



COVID-19 Safety Tips



Normalize mask-wearing

- Go together to pick out a mask that has a child-friendly design and comfortable material.



Teach and model good hygiene practices

- Washing hands with soap and safe water frequently
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or elbow



Staying social with friends and peers

- Encourage your child to stay social with their friends and peers through face-to-face interaction outside while practicing physical distancing or through monitored video calls



Help your child continue to cope

- Encourage your child to ask questions and express their feelings with you and their teachers or school's staff
- Validate and accept your child's feelings
- Maintain regular routines and schedules as much as possible
- Create opportunities for your child to play and relax

Keep informed and involved

- Coordinate with the school to receive information
- Get involved to support school safety efforts



Vaccination & Immunization Schedule



Vaccines help to protect your children against harmful disease.

Children attending school must be immunized against the following infectious diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Polio
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Meningococcal disease
- Whooping cough
- Varicella (chickenpox) - for children born in 2010 or later

Vaccine	2 Months	4 Months	6 Months	12 Months	15 Months	18 Months	4-6 Years	Grade 7	14-16 Years
DTaP-IPV-Hib Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Polio, Haemophilus influenzae type b	X (1 st dose)	X (2 nd dose)	X (3 rd dose)			X (4 th dose)			
Pneu-C-13 Pneumococcal Conjugate 13	X (1 st dose)	X (2 nd dose)		X (3 rd dose)					
Rot-1 Rotavirus	X	X	X (if needed)						
Men-C-C Meningococcal Conjugate C			X						
MMR Measles, Mumps, Rubella			X						
Var Varicella					X				
MMRV Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella (2 nd dose of MMR)							X		
Tdap-IPV Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, Polio							X		
HB Hepatitis B (2 dose series for school-based program)								X	
Men-C-ACYW Meningococcal Conjugate ACYW-135								X	
HPV Human Papillomavirus (2-3 dose series)								X	
Tdap Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis									X
Inf Influenza									Recommended annually in fall



Healthy Eating & Nutrition



Healthy eating is fundamental to good health, providing numerous short-term and long-term benefits at any age. Establishing positive eating habits helps to maintain a positive mental state and healthy weight, reduces the risk of chronic diseases, and leads to better overall health.

Making Healthy Choices at School

Children and youth spend a large part of their day at school. Providing your children with healthy food choices while at school gives them the energy they need to do their best along with essential vitamins and nutrients they need to grow and develop. Planning school lunches can be tricky – use the tips below to help make healthy choices while saving time and staying organized.

- Use the weekend to plan your family meal plan for the week
- Stock up on healthy on-the-go snacks to add to their lunch box
- Consider your schedule
- If you're busy, consider cooking a larger dinner the night before and use leftovers to make quick and easy lunches
- Chop and prep meals the night before to make mornings easier
- Involve your children
- Get input from your children on foods they like, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins
- Prep lunches together to develop their food skills and teach them how to make healthy meals and snacks



Recommended Daily Fruit & Vegetable Servings

2-3 years	4-8 years	9-13 years	14-18 years
=	=	=	=
4 servings	5 servings	6 servings	7-8 servings

Physical Activity

Physical activity is crucial for healthy growth and development of children and youth. Regular physical activity plays an essential role in improving heart health, bone density and psychosocial health, along with reducing future risk of chronic diseases. Establishing healthy habits early can last a lifetime—enhancing overall health, well-being, and quality of life.



Infants (< 1 yr)

- Physically active several times a day in a variety of ways
- Examples: interactive floor-based play, tummy time, crawling

Toddlers (1-2 yrs)

- At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities at any intensity
- Examples: playing outside, walking, dancing, moving around the home

Preschoolers (3-4 yrs)

- At least 180 minutes spent in a variety of physical activities, of which at least 60 minutes is energetic play
- Examples: playing outside, skipping, bike riding, hopping, running

Children & Youth (5-17 yrs)

- At least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Vigorous activities at least 3x per week
- Muscle and bone strengthening activities at least 3x per week
- Examples: climbing, running, lifting weights, sports

Sedentary Behaviours

In addition to staying active, reducing your children's recreational screen time (outside of academic activity) is important for promoting and maintaining a healthy weight at any age.



Infants (< 1 yr)

- Screen time is not recommended
- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (i.e. seated in a stroller or highchair)
- When sedentary, engage in reading or storytelling to keep your infant stimulated

Toddlers (1-2 yrs)

- For those younger than 2 years, screen time is not recommended
- For those aged 2 years, screen time should be no longer than 1 hour
- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time or sitting for prolonged periods
- When sedentary, engage in reading or storytelling to keep your toddler stimulated

Preschoolers (3-4 yrs)

- Screen time should be no more than 1 hour
- Not being restrained for more than 1 hour at a time or sitting for prolonged periods
- When sedentary, engage in reading or storytelling to keep your preschooler stimulated

Children & Youth (5-17 yrs)

- No more than 2 hours per day of recreational screen time
- Limit sitting for extended periods





Sleep



Children need adequate nighttime sleep for optimal health and development. Sleep can support physical health, emotional well-being, and quality of life.

Infants (<1 yr)

Infants need lots of good quality sleep and naps!

0-3 Months: 14-17 hours
4-11 Months: 12-16 hours

Toddlers (1-2 yrs)

11 to 14 hours of good-quality sleep, including naps, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.

Preschoolers (3-4 yrs)

10 to 13 hours of good-quality sleep, which may include a nap, with consistent bedtimes and wake-up times.

Children (5-13 yrs)

9 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night with consistent bed and wake-up times.

Youth (14-17 yrs)

8 to 10 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night with consistent bed and wake-up times.



Mental Health



According to the government of Ontario, approximately 1 in 5 children and youth in Ontario have a mental health challenge and 70% of these challenges have their onset in childhood or youth.

It is important to learn the signs of mental health challenges and to pay attention to your child's behaviour. Early identification and intervention of mental health challenges are critical as they can lead to greater school achievement and better health outcomes long term.

Note: In the event of an emergency, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest hospital or emergency department.

Signs and Symptoms of Mental Health Challenges

Children and youth may exhibit various moods, thoughts, and behaviours throughout their development. These can be typical of normal childhood development.

However, these moods, thoughts, and behaviours may be signs of underlying mental health challenges if they are intense, persist over long periods of time, are inappropriate for the child's age, and/or interfere with the child's life.

- Fluctuation in school marks
- Avoiding family and friends
- Frequent outbursts of anger or mood swings
- Feelings of worry and/or melancholy
- Lack of energy and motivation
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Acting out or rebelling
- Experimenting with drugs and/or alcohol
- Increased risk-taking behaviour
- Obsessing over appearance and/or weight
- Inadequate hygiene



Mental Health

Common Mental Health Disorders Among Children and Youth

- Anxiety
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); also known as attention deficit disorder (ADD)
- Depression and other mood disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Eating disorders



What Can You Do?

If you are worried about your child's mental health, listen to your instincts. Try to collect as much information as you can by observing their behaviours and discussing your concerns with your child. Actively listen to your child throughout the discussion and provide non-judgemental responses. Arrange to meet with a trusted and well-trained professional to discuss concerns and provide support and guidance for your child.

Resources and Helplines



CHEO

Click here for resources to better understand, manage, and support your child's mental health.



Kid's Help Phone

Call: 1-800-668-6868
Text: CONNECT to 686868
Online: kidshelpphone.ca



Good 2 Talk

Call: 1-866-925-5454
Text: GOOD2TALKON to 686868
Online: good2talk.ca

Sources

CHEO, Back to School During Covid-19: Tips For Parents And Caregivers, August 2020

CSEP, Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years (0-4 years)

CSEP, Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth (5-17 years)

CSEP, Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines

Government of Canada, Canada's Food Guide: Healthy Eating at School, December 2019

Government of Canada, Physical activity and your health, October 2018

Government of Canada, Physical Activity Tips for Children (5-11 years), November 2019

Government of Canada, Physical Activity Tips for Youth (12-17 years), November 2019

Government of Canada, Provincial and territorial routine and catch-up vaccination schedule for infants and children in Canada, June 2020

Government of Canada, Recommended immunization schedules: Canadian Immunization Guide, January 2020

Government of Ontario, Children and youth mental health: signs and symptoms, January 2020

Government of Ontario, Mental health services for children and youth, May 2020

Government of Ontario, Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario, December 2016

Government of Ontario, School Immunization Checklist, August 2017

Public Health Ontario, Parental Support Behaviours for Child Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Screen Time, 2015

World Health Organization, Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools, March 2020