

## CARING FOR AN INFANT, TODDLER OR YOUNG CHILD WITH COVID-19

**Purpose:** This document provides supportive guidance for those caring for young children diagnosed with COVID-19. This guidance supports at home care which is usually indicated for children with mild to moderate symptoms. This guidance is not intended to replace direction or recommendations from your Public Health Unit.

Excellent, general guidance to aid in caring for children in this circumstance, including how to monitor for symptoms, is found here: [How to Care for a Child at Home with COVID-19: Advice for Caregivers](#).

### *A Note for Caregivers*

This is difficult. Caring for a sick child is stressful and makes us feel anxious. All of these feelings are worse during a pandemic when we are isolated from friends, family and community. It is ok to feel overwhelmed, to ask for help and to want to speak to someone about how you are feeling. You might find some of these resources helpful to support you as your parent through this.

### **Best Practice to Limit Transmission**

COVID-19 is spread by droplets during close, unprotected contact ([Public Health Ontario](#)). This means that transmission can be from mucus and saliva droplets ejected from our mouth or nose while we talk, cough or a sneeze, making hand hygiene (washing or sanitizing your hands with alcohol based hand sanitizer) one of the most effective prevention strategies.

In order to stop the spread of the virus in a family where one person is positive the following is recommended:

- One healthy person is in charge of doing the close, personal care that the child requires although all in the household should follow this guidance
- Physical distancing measures (staying at least 2 meters apart or 6 feet apart) should be employed where possible
- When performing close care (within 2 meters) the caregiver should wear a face mask, disposable gloves and eye protection
- The child should be encouraged to wear a mask and encouraged not to touch their face if possible.

Tip to encourage mask use in children:

- Use pediatric sized masks to ensure they are as comfortable as possible-often times these come in fun colors and prints too!
- If the child is old enough, have them make masks for stuffed toys/dolls to help make mask wearing less scary or strange
- Allow the child to decorate the masks they wear with smiles, mustaches, clown noses, stickers etc.
- Read stories/watch videos with people wearing masks to help normalize this experience
- Use positive reinforcement (stickers, treats, screen time, stories...) to reward mask wearing

- Ask all others in the house to wear masks when in view of the child to make it feel normal to the child

## Caregiving Through COVID-19

- Consider activities you can do together while keeping safety in mind to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill.
- Children will want to be held; however, take precautions; wear masks, practice good cough etiquette, wash your hands frequently and regularly sanitize the environment;
- Do things that allow you to feel close and connected like watching a movie, reading stories, colouring, doing art projects, calling or Face Timing friends and family and playing games but do not share food items like a bowl of popcorn or bag of chips;
- If playing board games or using art supplies like crayons, clean parts with soap and water and be mindful of not touching your face and practicing good hand hygiene.
- Whenever wearing gloves or masks, discard them appropriately and wash your hands;
- Consider keeping your hair tied back to reduce amount of times you reach up to your face to move hair out of your eyes etc.;
- While feeding an baby or toddler, pay attention to habits we have such as 'testing' the temperature of the food from the same spoon used for the baby or toddler;
- If possible, wear gloves while wiping a child's runny nose (use a disposable tissue instead of a cloth) and wash your hands thoroughly immediately after wiping the child's nose;
- Sanitize toys frequently; wash plush toys; remove toys that cannot be easily washed or store them outside of reach;
- Remember to sanitize the highchair, play pen, and activity centers frequently and clean sheets, blankets and pillowcases often.

## Guidance for Specific Circumstances

### Changing a Diaper, or Training Underwear

- Have plastic lined garbage container next to you to collect soiled diaper and tissues or wipes (lined with plastic garbage bag is simplest method to safely collect and discard then replace with new garbage bag);
- If changing a 'pull-up' or cloth diaper have plastic lined laundry or other container to collect soiled item as well as a lined garbage pail to collect soiled diaper liners;
- If using disposable wipes, do not flush them down the toilet (despite being described as flushable they cause plumbing blockages);
- Wash any safety pins from cloth diapers with soap and hot water;
- Wear gloves and a mask while rinsing cloth diapers or pull-up; sanitize the sink, tap, and laundry container once emptied;
- Remove and discard gloves into a garbage bag;
- Wash hands thoroughly before removing mask and discard mask in plastic lined garbage;
- Wash hands again thoroughly.

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