



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

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Children and COVID-19

As more is known about the new coronavirus and COVID-19, worried parents and guardians can feel better about one detail: In a majority of cases, the disease seems to be much milder in babies and young children.

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 as compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. “It’s important for parents and caregivers to understand that children can, in fact, be infected with SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, and they can transmit it to others,” said Maggie Mann, Southeastern Idaho Public Health Director.

Generally, COVID-19 symptoms are milder in children than in adults, and some infected children may not have any signs of being sick at all. Fever and cough are common COVID-19 symptoms in both adults and children; shortness of breath is more likely to be seen in adults. Children can have pneumonia, with or without obvious symptoms. They can also experience sore throat, excessive fatigue or diarrhea.

However, serious illness in children with COVID-19 is possible, and parents should stay alert if their child is diagnosed with, or shows signs of, the disease.

Children infected with the coronavirus can transmit it to other kids and adults, but whether they spread the illness more or less than adults is not yet clear. Although for the most part, children’s COVID-19 symptoms are milder than those of older people, evidence shows that infected kids carry at least as much of the virus in their mouths and noses as adults.

Other children, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer are at increased risk of severe illness compared to other children. If your child has an underlying health condition, make sure to discuss with your child’s healthcare provider about your child’s specific risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

“It’s important to keep your child at home if you think your child is sick with COVID-19. Contact your pediatrician, family care practitioner or urgent care clinic if you don’t have a doctor,” said Mann.

“Our recommendations to keep our kids safe and healthy are the same as for adults. You should maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet from individuals not in your household, wear a mask, wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, and stay home when you are sick,” said Mann.

For southeast Idaho specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://siphidaho.org/coronavirus.php>.

For Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus, please visit <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>.

Join us Monday-Friday at 11 am for Facebook Live at <https://facebook.com/siphidaho>.

SIPH has a COVID Hotline to field questions from the community and is open Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can reach the hotline at (208) 234-5875.

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