

COVID-19 and kids

How does COVID-19 affect kids?



All children are at risk of getting COVID-19, but the good news is their symptoms are generally mild. Many children experience a cough, fever, and a runny nose, and only require rest at home, recovering quickly.

A very small percentage of children experience a barking cough, prolonged fever, breathing difficulties and abdominal pain, and these children are advised to see their doctor.



In Australia in 2021, **less than 3%** of children aged under 16 years who had a COVID-19 infection were hospitalised due to COVID-19.¹ Many were admitted because their parents were too unwell to look after them.²

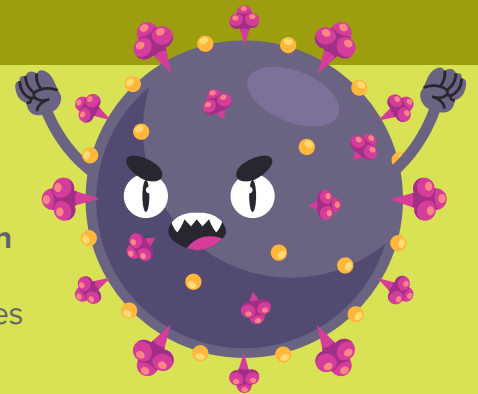
Children with underlying health conditions are at higher risk of experiencing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Conditions include asthma, obesity, prematurity, and compromised immune systems.²⁻⁵

Children aged younger than 6 months are also at greater risk.^{2,3}

What about Omicron?

Is this strain a bigger problem for kids?

Most children who get Omicron experience a mild infection and early data on hospitalisation rates shows **less than 2% of children aged under 10 years who get Omicron are hospitalised.**⁶ Early data indicates a lower risk of hospitalisation among Omicron cases in school-aged children compared to the Delta strain.^{6,7}



Are there any long-term impacts?

Long-term impacts of COVID-19 are still being investigated but early research suggests that **persistent symptoms can occur for many weeks in a small group of children.**⁸ These include the following symptoms:



Headache



Fatigue



Sleep disturbance



Concentration difficulties



Abdominal pain

About 1 in 2,500 children with COVID-19 can develop a condition called **Multisystem Inflammatory Disease in Children (MIS-C)** after having COVID-19.² The majority of children who are hospitalised with MIS-C are not vaccinated.^{9,10}

How can COVID-19 be prevented?

COVID-19 is spread by breathing in air or small droplets exhaled by an infected person, or touching your eyes, nose or mouth with hands that have COVID-19 germs on them. **It's important to teach children ways how to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19, such as:**



Physical distancing



Frequent hand washing with soap, or using hand sanitiser



Wearing well-fitted masks over mouth and nose



Staying home when unwell



Covering coughs and sneezes



COVID-19 vaccination

If my child gets COVID-19, how do I care for them?

If your child becomes unwell with COVID-19, you can provide pain relief such as **paracetamol**, especially in the case of fever, ensure they **drink plenty of fluids** and encourage them to **rest** until they have recovered.¹¹

If symptoms gets worse (e.g., fever for 5+ days, breathing difficulties, abdominal pain, drinking less, sleepy, irritable), **seek medical attention**.

You should also try and minimise the spread of COVID-19 in your home by **washing hands regularly** and wiping down commonly touched surfaces, such as benches, taps and door handles with a disinfectant or soap and water. **Thoroughly wash any common household items used by the person with COVID-19**, such as cups, eating utensils, bedding, and towels, and consider using separate bathroom facilities if available.¹¹



For more information on
COVID-19 in kids visit
tacklingcovid19.org.au

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