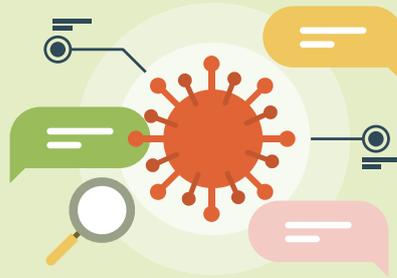


# Frequently Asked Questions



In the current COVID-19 situation, parents may be anxious about their child's every cough and sniffle. At the same time, they are cautious about seeing a doctor for fear of possible exposure to COVID-19.

These FAQs by **Dr Tan Mae Yue**, Associate Consultant at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital aim to keep parents informed and allay some anxiety.

## How vulnerable are children to COVID-19?

Although COVID-19 appears to affect mostly adults, confirmed cases of children range from 1% - 5% globally. Young children, particularly infants, are more vulnerable to COVID-19 with increased risk of severe infection.

If your child has underlying conditions like heart or lung issues, it is prudent to be cautious.



## Can I bring my child out? What do I do if I have to go out with my child?

As far as possible, avoid bringing your child out. If you do have to go out, wear a face mask for children two years and older and return home as soon as possible.

Limit outdoor activity to areas with no crowds, and ensure your child keeps his or her mask on if no strenuous physical activity is involved.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19 in children?

Other than respiratory symptoms such as runny nose and cough, fever is also seen in half of cases. These symptoms are similar to the common cold and it is normal for a child to have 6-8 colds a year.

Less common symptoms include muscle aches, sore throat, headache, vomiting and diarrhoea.



## How do I differentiate these symptoms from other common viral illnesses?

Respiratory symptoms in COVID-19 can be quite similar to other ailments.

Suspicion of COVID-19 is higher if there is known contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, or recent travel in the 2 weeks prior.

Your doctor will decide if a test for COVID-19 is necessary.

## What do I do if my child has these symptoms?

Monitor the child's temperature and be vigilant.

Let your child rest at home and ensure sufficient fluids. Avoid going outdoors.

Seek medical attention if symptoms persist for more than 5 days and there is no improvement.

## When should I bring my child to seek medical attention?

If your child has difficulty breathing, appears drowsy, has signs of dehydration or is peeing less than usual, bring him or her to see a doctor right away.

The doctor may recommend further investigations such as a blood test or X-ray.



## What measures can I do at home?

Ensure good hand hygiene, cover faces when coughing or sneezing, and practice social distancing especially with those who are sick. Disinfect surfaces and objects that may harbour germs in living areas.

Ensure a healthy diet and enough sleep to give your child's immune system a natural boost. Avoid secondhand smoke as this can affect their airways and increase susceptibility to colds.

## Should I self-medicate or use home remedies? What are the possible dangers?

Over-the-counter medications may relieve symptoms but should be used carefully.

We do not recommend routine use of cough mixtures and antihistamines, especially in those younger than 2 years old, unless your doctor has prescribed it.

Place medications in a place that is not easily accessible to children, to avoid accidental ingestion.

Home remedies such as humidification can help keep moisture in the air to reduce dryness in the airways.

Do not combine medications as this can cause side effects such as drowsiness. Follow dosages carefully.



## Should I give my child supplements?

This is generally not necessary as the essential vitamins are present in a balanced diet. Do talk to your child's doctor on the appropriate supplements if required.

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