

COVID-19: Keep On Keeping Your Distance

Families are gradually returning to some of the activities that paused when the COVID-19 pandemic began. With the virus still spreading, however, it is important for everyone to continue physical distancing along with other safety steps. Physical distancing means keeping space between yourself and other people outside your home. It is a vital step in helping to slow the spread of this virus.

“Social distancing” for all families

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads easily through physical contact from person to person. This is why it is important to reduce the ways people come in close contact with one another. An effective way to do this is to stay home as much as possible and avoid crowded, public places where it is difficult to keep a safe space between people.

Many communities have limits on how many people can attend events and gatherings or enter restaurants and bars. Many schools and universities have reduced close contact by providing online learning. When close interaction with others is likely, such as essential trips to the grocery store or gas station, the CDC recommends wearing a cloth face covering over your mouth and nose and staying **at least 6 feet** away from others. If you expect to attend a gathering, wear a face covering and stay at least 6 feet away from others, as well.

Self-Isolation

The virus that causes COVID-19 can spread from person to person even before symptoms start. So, if someone in your family starts to feel even slightly ill, run down, tired, or achy, it's important to stay home and practice “self isolation.” This means limiting contact with others. If more severe symptoms develop, like a fever, cough or shortness of breath, call your doctor. They will let you know if a COVID-19 test is needed, and what the next steps should be. If it is believed someone in your family has COVID-19, quarantine will likely be recommended.

Quarantine

Self-isolation and quarantine both mean you have no contact with the public. However, quarantine is the term used if you were in close contact (within about 6 feet) of a person with COVID-19 but have yet to

test positive. These people are asked to stay away from others for 14 days or longer, to make sure they do not spread the virus during this “pre-illness” or incubation period.

Why physical distancing is important

Physical distancing in indoor and outdoor spaces is an essential way to slow down the spread of COVID-19. And it's important to keep following physical distancing recommendations in your community, whether you're in one of the high-risk groups or not.

With limited child care options and people working from home, it may be tempting to let kids gather together. But physical distancing only works if we all participate. And slowing down or preventing the spread of the virus will save lives.

Remember

As the virus that causes COVID-19 continues to spread, it is important to follow recommendations of federal, state, and local governments to protect all of us from getting sick. Scientists are working to understand this new syndrome.

We all are responsible for protecting those at higher risk. Steps like physical distancing and wearing cloth face coverings may feel like an inconvenience, but it's the best way right now to protect our family, friends, and neighbors who may be vulnerable.

Stay informed

Families are encouraged to stay up to date about this situation as we learn more about how to prevent this virus from spreading in homes and in communities.

For more parenting information from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), visit www.HealthyChildren.org.

For the latest developments from the CDC, including travel warnings, new cases, and prevention advice, visit www.cdc.gov.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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Source: HealthyChildren.org (Corinn Cross, MD, FAAP; 9/17/20)

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