

Administrative Offices

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WeArePublicHealth.org

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October 19, 2020

Dear Maricopa County Healthcare Providers,

Schools are steadily re-opening for in-person instruction in Maricopa County. With more people coming together in the school setting while COVID-19 is circulating in the community, we are all concerned about the safety of students and staff. Public health has instituted [new guidance for schools](#) regarding children, teachers and staff with viral symptoms, including the requirement for a child, teacher, or school staff member who exhibits COVID-19 related symptoms to [isolate according to our criteria](#) with a few specific exceptions.

COVID-19 symptoms in children

Since the spring, when schools first closed to in-person instruction, we have all learned a great deal about COVID-19. We now know that there is a long list of [COVID-19 symptoms](#) reported by people who test positive and that the illness mimics many common infections in children. While symptomatic individuals are more likely to infect others, asymptomatic people also spread COVID-19. Numerous publications have also confirmed that even young children, with or without symptoms, do spread COVID-19 to others.

Children with ANY COVID-19 related symptoms MUST be isolated at home

Children with COVID-19 related symptoms should be sent home to isolate away from others. Any of the symptoms listed below that are not related to an already-diagnosed chronic condition, are a reason for exclusion from school until Maricopa County Department of Public Health isolation criteria are met.

- Fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}$ F or 38° C)
- Subjective chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue (not as only symptom in school setting)
- Diarrhea
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting

There are **3 ways** for a child with symptoms to return to school before the 10-day isolation period.

- 1) If the child **tests negative** for COVID-19 (please have a low threshold to test) OR
- 2) The child has a **laboratory-confirmed alternative diagnosis** from a healthcare provider (e.g. Strep throat or influenza) OR
- 3) The symptoms are related to a known chronic condition, such as allergies, belly pain, asthma, or chronic headaches.

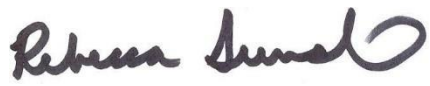
Preliminary data – symptoms in Maricopa County children

Maricopa County disease investigators have been learning more about COVID-19 symptoms in children as they have talked with the families of over 7000 school-aged children who have tested positive for COVID-19. Here is what we have learned so far.

- The majority (over 75%) of all children reported with COVID-19 reported at least one symptom.
- Pre-school children have fewer symptoms overall, with fever being the most common symptom.
- More than half of symptomatic elementary school aged children reported fever and/or headache, with other symptoms such as fatigue, cold symptoms, muscle aches, diarrhea, and loss of taste or smell occurring less than half of the time.
- Children aged 12 and over reported more symptoms overall with the majority reporting fatigue, headache, muscle aches and loss of taste and smell. Fever and cough were reported less than half the time.
- Less than 1 in 10 children diagnosed with COVID-19 reported difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.

So, please remind parents to keep children home when they have ANY COVID-19 symptoms. We all need to exercise excess caution to keep our families safe. And encourage parents to teach their kids to wash their hands, avoid touching their face, cover their coughs and sneezes, and keep those masks in place, especially while at school.

Stay healthy,



Rebecca Sunenshine, MD, FIDSA
Medical Director



Marcy Flanagan, DBA, MPH, MA
Executive Director

Please review guidance for Healthcare Providers on a regular basis. Guidance is updated frequently:

- [Maricopa County Department of Public Health](#) | 602.506.6767
- [Arizona Department of Health Services](#) | 844.542.8201
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) | 800.CDC.INFO