

Family Support NEWS BRIEF

A publication of

 CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES



Helping Parents Stop the Spread of Communicable Diseases

Information Regarding Communicable Diseases

During 2022, there has been an increase in the spread of communicable diseases among many infants and children in America. There are several infections, including respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, influenza, measles, whooping cough, and most recently Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), that are becoming more widespread. This has become a concern for many state health departments, hospitals, and healthcare facilities across the United States. In September 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a statement informing healthcare facilities of this crisis and what steps they can take to control the spread of these infections.¹

Transmission of Communicable Diseases

These diseases can spread when someone who is infected coughs or sneezes and virus droplets enter the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth, by touching a surface that has the virus, or by direct contact with the virus.²

Signs and Symptoms

Most frequent signs and symptoms of these diseases are fever, diarrhea, fatigue, coughing, rashes, and headache. When parents see these signs, it is important to monitor your child and make them feel as comfortable as possible. This means keeping your child hydrated, allowing for plenty of rest, keeping the home temperature comfortable, and other remedies as

needed. If your child is experiencing a fever of 100.4 °F or higher, has difficulty breathing, refuses to eat or drink, or is vomiting, call your medical care provider or take the child to the emergency room.³

Treatment and Care

The most important step to prevent the spread of communicable diseases is to have your children vaccinated. Over the years, immunizations have been developed to help prevent the spread of viruses in young children and adolescents. Vaccines have prevented illnesses such as polio, influenza, measles, pertussis (whooping cough), chickenpox, and rubella. It's important for parents to know about all the available vaccines that their children will need to get. The vaccine schedule shows what vaccines are needed for children from birth to age 6. The schedule also indicates whether they require a series of doses. Parents can discuss the vaccine schedule with their healthcare provider during well-child child visits.⁴



Prevention

It is important for parents and caregivers to wash their hands, cover their face when coughing or sneezing, and avoid close contact with others.⁵

Parents should also consider asking friends and family to not visit during the time an infant or child has a virus.

Parents can take many steps to prevent the spread of viruses within their household, such as cleaning frequently to stop the growth of mold or bacteria.⁶

To maintain the health and safety of your home and prevent viruses from spreading, families can take several precautions. Parents should wash your hands before handling any food. Parents should clean all kitchen tools prior to using them. Parents should make every effort to clean and disinfect several areas of the home such as the kitchen, bathroom, living room, and playroom. It's also important to have proper ventilation in the home to reduce the number of virus elements in the air.⁷

What Home Visitors Can Do

Home visitors are encouraged to provide health information to their families who have infants and young children. Information can include handouts on viruses and communicable diseases during home visits, encourage parents to take necessary precautions to limit transmission, and encourage the parent to schedule appointments with their healthcare provider.

Home visitors can look to the protective factors to support parents. For example, home visitors can encourage parents to seek out their social connections to see if other parents have experienced this with their children. Some parents may be experiencing stress when dealing with this illness. Home visitors can connect them with mental health resources, which can increase the protective factor of concrete support in times of need.

Family support professionals should be sure to wash their hands frequently, cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing, use hand sanitizer, and clean any materials they bring for visit activities.⁸

Helpful Resources

[Communicable Diseases in Children](#)

[Nemours Kids Health](#)

[Pennsylvania Department of Health – Infant and Child Vaccine and Immunizations](#)

[Healthy Children.org](#)

[Vaccines Preventable Diseases](#)

Sources

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2022/10/11/1127873967/respiratory-illness-covid-children-hospitalizations-health>

¹ <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2022/han00474.asp>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/transmission.html>

³ <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/fever.html>

⁴ <https://healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Vaccination-Protects-Against-These-Diseases.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-easyread.html>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/prevention.html>

⁶ <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/rsv.html?ref=search>

⁷ <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p44970.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/humandevlopment/covid-19/guidance-for-home-visitors.html>



January Family Support Webinar Recap

The January Family Support webinar, “Supporting the Well-being of Family Support Professionals,” was held on Jan. 11, 2023.

The purpose of the webinar was to discuss how domains of personal and professional well-being can be used as a lens to consider how family support professionals can be supported in their work.

The session also included strategies and resources on self-care.

[Watch recording of Supporting the Well-being of Family Support Professionals webinar](#)

The next Family Support webinar is Wednesday, March 1, 10 to 11:15 a.m. ET.

Parents as Teachers featured in The New York Times

On Jan. 18, 2023, The New York Times published “[I Don’t Want to Die’: Fighting Maternal Mortality Among Black Women](#),” which featured Show Me Strong Family parent educators, certified doulas, and the families with whom they work.

Parents as Teachers Online Courses

Foundational and Model Implementation

For new parent educators and new supervisors of affiliate programs.

Monday, Feb. 27 – Friday, March 10, 2023

Monday, March 20 – Friday, March 31, 2023

Monday, April 17 – Friday, April 28, 2023

Monday, May 8 – Friday, May 19, 2023

Foundational 2: 3 Years Through Kindergarten

Monday, Feb. 21 – Friday, Feb. 24, 2023

Monday, March 13 – Friday, March 17, 2023

Monday, May 30 – Friday, June 2, 2023

Monday, June 26 – Friday, June 30, 2023

Register for courses at the National Parents as Teachers’ [training website](#).

Questions regarding registration for PAT trainings? Contact [Jennifer Esposito](#).

Save the Date!



Thriving Together Growing Stronger

May 2-4 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania



Family Support Team

Family Support at Center for Schools and Communities provides training and technical assistance to Parents as Teachers providers, Children's Trust Fund grantees, and the Strengthening Families Leadership Team.

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Safe Kids Corner



Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that you cannot see, taste, or smell and because of this, is often called the "invisible killer." It is created when fuel-burning appliances, such as heating devices, grills, clothes dryers, and vehicles do not burn all the fuel they need to function.

Young children process CO differently than adults, so they may experience more severe side effects and show signs of poisoning quickly. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, nausea, and drowsiness. At its worst, CO can cause severe side effects or even death. However, there are steps you can take to keep your family safe from carbon monoxide poisoning.

The Hard Facts of Carbon Monoxide

In 2017, poison control centers reported 3,248 cases of carbon monoxide exposure in children ages 19 and under.

Top Tips for Carbon Monoxide Safety

1. Install carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Make sure there is one on every level of your home, especially around sleeping areas.
2. Test CO alarms every month. Replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Avoid using gas appliances inside your home. Use generators and grills outside of your home, away from windows and doors. Warm up vehicles outside of your garage.
4. In a CO emergency, leave your home immediately. If the CO alarm sounds, quickly leave your home. Move to a safe location outside where you can breathe in fresh air before you call for help.

Source: <https://www.safekids.org/carbon-monoxide>