

Interim FAQs for Communities: COVID-19 and Pediatric CPR



American
Heart
Association.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

CPR & Emergency Cardiovascular Care

Q: Can I get COVID-19 from performing CPR?

A: According to the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov), the situation is rapidly evolving, and your risk is variable depending on your location. Children tend to exhibit a milder form of the illness than adults.

For pediatric patients, CPR with breaths is recommended for people who have been trained in CPR, but as an alternative, Hands-Only CPR can be performed until help arrives if you are unsure about putting your mouth on a stranger's mouth, or have concerns the person may have COVID-19.

Q: Should I still do the breaths for CPR?

A: Please review the following recommendations:

- For a child or an infant, the cause of the heart stopping is likely to be due to a respiratory issue. So, giving compressions with breaths is the most effective CPR in helping to save lives, especially in children/infants, and people whose hearts have stopped due to drug overdose, drowning, and other respiratory issues.
- Most children or infants who have their heart stop are provided CPR by a family member or friend. Consider performing breaths and compressions, especially if the child/infant is known to you.
- If a child's heart stops, and you are concerned they may have had respiratory symptoms, it is at your discretion to perform or not perform breaths based on your personal preference. It is still important to phone 9-1-1 (or your local emergency number) and, if you are in a public place, find an AED. If you choose to perform breaths, you can also use a barrier device, such as a pocket mask or face shield, to help protect yourself.
- If you do not feel comfortable giving breaths, or are concerned about COVID-19, you can consider only performing Hands-Only CPR until help arrives.
- Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective as conventional CPR in many cases, and is much better than no CPR. If you choose to perform Hands-Only CPR, first phone 9-1-1 (or your local emergency number), and then push hard and fast in the center of the person's chest until advanced help arrives.
- If you think the person may have COVID-19, please state your concerns to the emergency response telecommunicator so everyone who responds can be aware of the potential for COVID-19 transmission.

Q: Can I still use an AED?

A: **Yes.** Early AED use is still very important. AED pads can be placed on the person's chest as directed by the AED prompts. Use the AED as directed. There are no additional directions needed for coronavirus. Clean the AED surface after use with simple disinfectant to kill the virus, following the manufacturer guidelines. Protect yourself and others by wearing gloves when cleaning then washing your hands with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your face (e.g., eyes, mouth, or nose).

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Q: Can we still have mass training events?

A: The American Heart Association and American Academy of Pediatrics support following the existing recommendations for mass gatherings outlined on the [World Health Organization \(WHO\) website](#), and in the U.S. refer to the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) recommendations, as well as the proposals and suggestions of the national public health authorities which will have the most up to date facts and will provide information on basic protective measures against COVID-19. In the U.S., at the current time, we do not recommend mass training events. Also, anyone who does not feel comfortable gathering for events should not attend mass trainings. And, we urge anyone feeling ill to stay home.

Q: What is a novel coronavirus? And what is COVID-19?

A: A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the [coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans](#) and cause mild illness, like the common cold. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. (Source: [CDC](#), accessed 3/23/2020)

Q: How does it spread?

A: The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. (Source: [CDC](#))

Q: Can I catch COVID-19 from surfaces?

A: It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. (Source: [CDC](#))

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Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A: The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Children appear to have a milder version of the illness than older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, who are more likely to develop serious illness. Parents with children who have symptoms such as fever, cough and difficulty breathing should call their doctor to determine next steps. Also call your doctor if you have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or have recently traveled from an area with [widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19](#). (Source: [CDC](#))

Q: How do I know how many people have COVID-19 in my community?

A: The rates of COVID-19 vary by location, however, the risk to the general public is still low. But, the situation is rapidly evolving, so it is important to follow the recommendations of the [CDC](#), local/federal government and/or your local public health department on what are the current rates of COVID-19 in your community.

Q: How does the [CDC](#) recommend I protect myself so I do not get COVID-19?

A: Please review the following recommendations:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- [Wash your hands often with soap and water](#) for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for [health workers](#) and [people who are taking care of someone in close settings](#) (at home or in a health care facility).

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- Call ahead to a healthcare professional if you develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread. Tell your healthcare professional about your recent travel or contact. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.
- **AND PLEASE DON'T FORGET:** It is not too late to get a flu vaccine.