



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Child Care Providers

How can I protect children, their families and staff from COVID- 19?

- **Encourage vaccination** for staff, parents, guardians and caregivers age 12 years and older.
- **Wear masks indoors. Children under 2 years of age should not wear a mask.**
- **Stay home when sick** – both staff and children should stay home when they have symptoms of illness.
- **Frequent handwashing.**
- **Regular and consistent cleaning and disinfecting.**

Guidance for child care centers: [Quick Guide: Help Protect your Child Care Center from COVID-19 pdf](#)

Guidance for home-based child care: [Quick Guide: Help Protect Your Family Child Care Home from COVID-19 pdf](#)

When should a child stay home from daycare?

Whenever they are showing symptoms of possible illness such as cough, fever, headache, diarrhea, vomiting, short of breath, chills, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, muscle pain, runny nose, feeling tired, poor appetite.

[Child Care Providers Quick Guide Symptoms of COVID-19 at Child Care pdf](#)

What do I do if a child in my care becomes sick or is diagnosed with COVID-19?

- Arrange for the child to be supervised away from the other children.
- Call the parent or guardian and arrange for the child to go home or seek medical attention.
- Ventilate the area the child occupied then wait several hours to let the virus particles settle before cleaning.
- Clean and disinfect areas that the ill child occupied. Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning.

When can a child diagnosed with COVID-19 return to daycare?

A sick child can end isolation and return to daycare when ALL of the following are met:

- Day 11, counting the day that symptoms began as Day 1 AND
- Fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication AND
- Symptoms have improved.

Should I notify staff and families when a child attending daycare or staff member is diagnosed with COVID-19?

Yes. If someone in your facility is diagnosed with COVID-19, you should create a list of all persons who were in close contact with the sick person and inform staff, parents, guardians and other caregivers of the possible exposure. A close contact is defined as someone who has been within 6 feet of the infected person (masked or unmasked) for more than 15 minutes. Due to healthcare privacy laws, you are not allowed to disclose the identity of the sick person. Children and staff who are identified as close contacts should be advised to stay home (quarantine) for 10 full days and consult their healthcare provider for evaluation and possible COVID-19 test.

Do staff/caregivers who are vaccinated need to quarantine?

Montana law ([HB 702](#)) prohibits discrimination based on vaccination status and therefore, vaccinated and unvaccinated staff and caregivers should quarantine if they are a close contact of someone testing positive for COVID-19.

How should I clean and disinfect when a child or staff in my facility is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19?

Follow your usual cleaning and disinfecting practices. Additional recommendations are based on when the person who is sick last occupied the space.

Less than 24 hours

1. Close off areas used by the person who is sick and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
2. Wait several hours before you clean and disinfect.
3. Open doors and windows and use fans or the other ventilation to increase air circulation in the area.
4. Use EPA-approved cleaning and disinfecting products according the instructions on the label.
5. Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
6. Focus on the areas occupied by the person who is sick.
7. Vacuum the space if needed, preferably with a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
8. Wash any dirty laundry from the person who sick. It is okay to wash with other's people items.

More than 24 hours - cleaning is enough.

More than 3 days - no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

Checklist for All Child Care Facilities - COVID-19

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/assets/ecfsd/childcare/COVID/covidchecklist.pdf>

For information on where to get tested for COVID-19 or vaccinated against COVID-19, go to <https://covid.riverstonehealth.org/> or call the Public Health Information Line at 406.651.6415.