

# keeping your baby safe

bonus resources  
for new parents,  
courtesy of:

oviahealth™

---



Comprehensive resources to help you navigate  
keeping your baby safe, all in one place.

---

# table of contents

- 3 What you should know about the coronavirus and children
  - 6 Keeping your newborn safe from germs
  - 8 Keeping baby sunburn-free
  - 10 Is it possible to spoil a newborn?
-

# what you should know about coronavirus and children



The coronavirus outbreak presents every family with unique challenges. As a parent you might have a number of questions right now, including questions about how coronavirus might impact your little one. We're here to answer your questions so that you can help keep your family healthy and safe.

## Does COVID-19 impact children differently?

There's still a lot that experts don't know about COVID-19, a disease caused by the coronavirus. Most children who have been confirmed to have COVID-19 have generally had mild, cold-like symptoms — this includes cough, runny nose, fever, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. **If your child shows any signs of COVID-19, you should call their healthcare provider right away.**

We also know that some people are at higher risk of having more serious illness — including individuals who are older or have underlying medical conditions like heart conditions, lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, diabetes, or compromised immune systems. If your child has underlying medical conditions, you can always ask their healthcare provider any questions that you might have about this.

## What does the coronavirus have to do with Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children?

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, or MIS-C, is a rare condition involving inflammation of body parts including the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and other organs. It has been seen in some children exposed to COVID-19. While most children who get MIS-C do get better with medical care, it can be very serious and even deadly.

It's important that you contact your child's healthcare provider right away if you think they might have MIS-C. Symptoms can include:

- **fever**
- **fatigue**
- **rash**
- **bloodshot eyes**
- **neck pain**
- **abdominal pain, diarrhea, or vomiting**

And if your child shows any serious warning signs of MIS-C, you should get them emergency medical attention immediately. Emergency signs can include:

- **difficulty breathing**
- **steady pain or pressure in the chest**
- **bluish lips or face**
- **confusion**
- **trouble waking or staying awake**
- **severe abdominal pain**

There's still so much that experts don't know about MIS-C, but medical providers are able to provide care for the symptoms and treat inflammation. So if you suspect that your child might have MIS-C, it's important that they get the care they need right away.

## How can you keep your child protected from the coronavirus?

One of the best ways that you can help keep your child protected is by engaging in social distancing — staying home as much as possible unless needing to leave your home for essential errands (like grocery shopping or visiting the pharmacy), not socializing with anyone who lives outside your home, and keeping your distance from people (at least 6 feet away) if you do need to leave home. You should also have them engage in a lot of the same good hygiene practices that you are. Being a good model for all of these behaviors yourself can go a long way toward helping your little one establish healthy habits that can help prevent the spread of coronavirus:

- Have your child clean their hands often and learn when they should do so — like before eating, after using the potty, after playing outside, after returning from a public place, or after catching a cough or a sneeze. Hand washing is best, but hand sanitizer can be used if you don't have easy access to a sink.
- If your little one does have to cough or sneeze, encourage them to do so safely, into a bent elbow — saying that they can catch their cough or sneeze like a vampire can sometimes make it more fun — or a tissue, which should then be thrown away, followed by handwashing again.

- Teach them to avoid other people who are sick.
- Adults and children who are age 2 and older should [wear a cloth face covering](#) when leaving the house. (Cloth face coverings should not be worn by children under age 2 and anyone having trouble breathing or otherwise impaired.) So if your child is of this age and needs to accompany you out of the house for an essential errand, you and your child should both wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth.

You can also take further steps to keep germs from being spread around your home. You should regularly disinfect the high-touch surfaces in your home that you and your family touch regularly, like doorknobs, light switches, railings, baby gates, refrigerator door handles, sinks, toilets, remotes, tables, desks, hard chairs, and even toys. You can wash your child’s soft or stuffed toys according to their laundering instructions — using warm water if possible is best — and make sure they dry completely after being washed.

## How else can you keep your child healthy at this time?

Aside from all of the above, one of the most important things you can do at this time is ensure that your child knows that they are loved. Depending on how old your little one is, they might not have much sense of what’s going on or they might be very aware of the situation. You should [be honest](#) with your little one in a way that is age-appropriate, and do all that you can to remain calm and reassuring, even in this stressful time, as you don’t want them to feel overly worried. With that in mind, stay on the lookout for [signs of stress](#) in your child.

Depending on how old your child is, you may also want to help them continue on with their school studies and stay connected to classmates, friends, and teachers. Same goes for helping them stay connected to extended family and loved ones, even though you can’t be together in person right now. It’s also important to help your little one stay active, so you may want to spend some time outside each day if you can do so safely while practicing social distancing or find ways to safely stay active inside. And even if you’re quite busy during this time — we know many parents are continuing to work, and potentially figuring out how to do so from home, while school and daycares are closed — make sure you find some time each day to spend focused, quality time with your child. Make time to play, to read, to snuggle, to just be together.

**Helping your little one feel safe and secure at home is one of the most important things you can do, even during this challenging time, and will likely nourish you as well. [Learn more about the coronavirus.](#)**

---

### Sources

- “Caring for Children.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 28 2020. Retrieved March 31 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children.html>.
- “For Parents: Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 20 2020. Retrieved May 27 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>.
- “Frequently Asked Questions.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 28 2020. Retrieved March 31 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>.
- “People who are at higher risk for severe illness.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 26 2020. Retrieved March 31 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>.
- “Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 30 2020. Retrieved March 31 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>.
- “Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 4 2020. Retrieved April 6 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

# keeping your newborn safe from germs



While it is true that exposing an immune system to germs makes fighting illness easier, your baby's body isn't fully developed, and the exposure that adults can handle may cause problems in newborns.

Your child will get all the germ exposure they need naturally, so the best way to keep them healthy is by limiting germs in the first 3 to 6 months.

There are many ways you can keep them safe from germs — check out a few tried and true tricks to avoid becoming overly-anxious while keeping them in fighting form.

## Handwashing and hand sanitizing

The easiest way to avoid infant illness is by handwashing, and that goes for you as well as other members of your household. Always wash your hands before handling your child and insist others do as well.

## Managing clean feeding

Throw away any leftovers, whether you're breastfeeding or formula feeding, as bottles are breeding grounds for bacteria.

Sterilize anything that goes into your child's mouth, such as pacifiers or bottles, before first-time use and clean thoroughly after subsequent uses.

Refrigerate formula as soon as possible to keep it from spoiling.

## Be pet-smart

While exposure to pets early in life is shown to actually benefit your child and prevent allergies and asthma, animals' mouths are filled with bacteria that can be harmful to them.

Avoid direct contact with pets' tongues or mouths, keep litter boxes in places that your child can't access, and wash their hands after playtime.

## Take control in crowds

On an outing with your child, it can be hard to prevent friends, family, and even strangers from wanting to reach out and grab.

Try to avoid large crowds, and, for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, any gatherings outside of your household. Don't be afraid to just say, "My doctor says they shouldn't be touched."

## Relax and keep it in perspective

With a newborn it can seem like any germ may cause illness, but try to relax and remember that germs are natural — despite your child's tiny size, their body is built to fight off infection.

In fact, it's a bit of exposure in the first place that helps your child build a strong immune system that they will have for the rest of their life.

---

### Sources

- Judith Labiner-Wolfe, Sara B. Fein, Katherine R. Shealy. "Infant Formula--Handling Education and Safety." *Pediatrics*. 122 Suppl 2:S85-90. Web. October 2008.
- James T.C. Li. "Does childhood exposure to germs help prevent asthma?" Mayo Clinic. Mayo Clinic, April 9 2013. Web.
- "Germs." Canadian Public Health Association. Canadian Public Health Association, Web.
- "Heading Out With Baby." Healthy Children. American Academy of Pediatrics, June 1 2010. Web.



# keeping baby sun-burn free



Sun protection for your baby, and avoiding direct sun exposure, should always be a priority, but it is especially important in these early months.

Because an infant's skin has less melanin, the pigment in skin that provides some sun protection, newborns and young babies are especially susceptible to sunburn.

This means your child's skin is sensitive and immature enough that the FDA advises not using sunscreen until they are 6 months old, so the best protection from the sun is going to come from avoiding direct exposure altogether.

## Preventing exposure

If you can, keep your child inside or in the shade during periods of particularly high sunlight, like the late morning or the early afternoon. You may also want to consider getting screens for your car windows around their car seat. When you take them out without a car, stroller covers, or a light blanket to drape over their carrier can keep them protected, too.

## Protective clothing

When your child is outside, make sure that they wear a hat with a brim that covers and shades the sensitive skin of their head, face, ears, and neck. Add some stylish sunglasses to keep your little rockstar's eyes and face shielded, and dress them in lightweight clothing that covers their arms and legs. Tightly-woven fabrics or knits work best, while more sheer materials are less effective.



## If a sunburn does happen

Accidents do happen! If you notice that your child is more flushed than normal, is fussy, or is crying more than usual, it might be a sign that they are picking up a sunburn.

Don't panic, just move them out of the sun and cool their skin with cold compresses over the sunburned area. If they continue to be fussy or irritable, or if their skin is red and irritated, call your healthcare provider, who may recommend bringing them in for a checkup.

## When your child is old enough for sunblock

When your child is old enough for sunblock, at around 6 months or so, choose one with an SPF of over 30 (50 is recommended). Make sure the sunblock you choose doesn't contain insect repellent. You should reapply a fresh coating every 2 hours.

It might seem like a lot of layers of precautions just to enjoy a summer day, but your child's skin is going to thank you one day. And of course it's important to be careful, but that's no reason for your child not to get the chance to enjoy outdoor play.

---

### Sources

- Lawrence E. Gibson. "When is it OK for a baby to wear sunscreen?" Mayo Clinic. Mayo Clinic, June 8 2016. Web.
- "Should you put sunscreen on infants? Not usually." U.S. Food and Drug Administration. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, July 6 2016. Web.
- "Sun safety for children." NHS Choices. Gov.UK, May 3 2016.
- "Sun safety tips for infants, babies, and toddlers." Skin Cancer Foundation. Skin Cancer Foundation, July 6 2009. Web.

# is it possible to spoil a newborn?



Despite the advice you may have heard from grandmothers, friends, family, and other random people you meet on the street, recent studies have shown that it is impossible to spoil a newborn.

**So go ahead, give your child all the love and care they want and need.**

Keeping your child close to you actually aids their brain development and teaches them that you will be there when they need you, solidifying the bond between parent and child.

A newborn's brain is not developed enough to understand manipulation, so when your child cries, it is not to try to control you. Rather, they cry to communicate the basic needs to be held and fed, and your response to these needs is an important part of your child's development.

In fact, babies that are secure in infancy develop a strong sense of self that helps them self-soothe later in life.

After 6 months, however, babies start to learn enough about cause and effect that some of their cries are about getting what they want, instead of a physical reaction to a need, and they start to anticipate your response to certain actions.

At this age, or after, some parents start to differentiate between their babies' wants and needs, and to respond to needs, but not all wants, as a way to discourage some behaviors. Holding your child as they fall asleep is a common example of this - your baby doesn't need to only fall asleep in your arms, but if that's how they feel most comfortable, and they know that fussing will get them their way, it can be problematic.

---

## Sources

- Kyla Boyse. "Child Development News." Michigan Medicine, University of Michigan. University of Michigan. June 2007. Web.
- Melodi Faris, Elizabeth McCarroll. "Crying Babies." Texas Child Care. Fall 2010. Web.
- Kate Garry. "Psychologist Darcia Narvaez Studies Parenting Practices." University of Notre Dame College of Arts and Letters. University of Notre Dame, September 17 2010. Web.
- Michael Price. "DNA isn't the whole story." American Psychological Association. American Psychological Association, October 2009. Web.
- "Am I spoiling my baby?" Center for Early Education and Development. University of Minnesota, 2009. Web.