

Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 Testing for Children



- **My child is being admitted in the ER but does not have symptoms of COVID-19; do they need to be tested?**

All children admitted to the hospital will require a COVID-19 test. This is to protect our patients, their families and our team members. COVID-19 symptoms in children are much different than in adults and many children don't have any symptoms at all. In fact, 50% of the cases reported in children show mild or no symptoms at all. One way to limit the spread of COVID-19 is to have patients and families wear masks, even if there are no symptoms.

- **Can I refuse to have my child tested for COVID-19?**

If you chose to refuse the COVID-19 test for your child, they will be placed on COVID-19 precautions for the duration of their stay. This means providers will use full PPE, parents will not be able to leave the room at any time during their child's hospitalizations and will need to wear a mask throughout the hospitalization when team members enter the room.



- **My child has an upcoming admission and is required to be tested for COVID-19. Where can they be tested and when?**

Having your child tested for COVID-19 can cause fear and anxiety for both parent and child. For very young children or children with high anxiety Inova Fairfax Hospital Pre-Procedural Evaluation Clinic offers Child Life specialists to help you and your child through the testing. Please call **571-472-3344** and schedule an appointment for 2-3 days before your scheduled surgery, procedure or planned admission. Please leave a voicemail message, and someone will call you back shortly. Two parents/caregivers may accompany the child. Everyone will be asked to wear a mask while in the building. The test is very quick to perform, just a swab into the nose for 10 seconds.

In addition, Inova Urgent Care in North Arlington, Tysons, Dulles-South, and Ashburn offer pre-procedural/surgical testing and COVID-19 testing. Inova Urgent Care centers in West Springfield and Centreville offer pre-procedural testing only. [See locations and hours of operation.](#)

If your child is being tested prior to an admission, procedure or surgery we are asking that all household members remain isolated from others to prevent a new exposure before your test, procedure or admission. This means everyone remain home, no play dates or visitors at the house, no visits to restaurants or grocery stores from the time your child is tested until the day of admission. If you or your child develop a fever, coughing, headaches, sore throat or diarrhea please contact your surgeon or the physician ordering your test or the hospital admission desk immediately.

- **What is the acceptable timeframe to be tested before surgery/ procedure or planning admission?**

Testing must occur 2-3 days prior to your child's procedure. Test results will be reported within 48 hours. Patients will still be screened for COVID-19 symptoms and temperature when entering the hospital on the day of surgery.



- **What type of COVID-19 restrictions/ precautions can I expect for myself, as a parent, at the time of an admission?**

When your child is admitted to the hospital, parents will be on full COVID-19 precautions/restrictions for at least 24 hours. What does this mean? During this initial restriction, access to the hospital is limited and parents are asked not to go to Panera or anywhere else in the hospital and to wear a mask when staff enter the room. Parents should also expect to see providers wearing full COVID-19 precautions and may notice limited interactions with family members.

- **I have heard the COVID-19 test is a very uncomfortable process. What will the testing be like for my child?**

When you arrive for your child's test the nurses and Child Life specialists will be wearing protective gear to protect them and you and your child. This includes a yellow gown, a mask and face shield or goggles. Tell your child about this ahead of time so they are less surprised or scared when they see us dressed this way. We will ask you to hold your child in a comforting position during the test to keep them safe, comfortable and reduce their fear. If you are uncomfortable with this let the team member know. The nurse will ask your child to tilt their head up, look toward the ceiling and to "stay still like a statue!" The nurse will insert the swab into one nostril toward the back of your child's nose and then gently twist it for 5-10 seconds. Your child may cry as this is an uncomfortable feeling. The nurse will remove the swab and place it into a test tube.

[Learn more about what to expect during the test](#)



■ **How can I best prepare my child for their COVID-19 test?**

- Use this guide to explain the procedure.
- Bring a comfort item from home, such as a blanket or stuffed animal. It may be helpful to have a cold drink for your child to enjoy once the swab is complete.
- Develop a coping plan with your child by providing appropriate choices:
 - Does your child want to sit on your lap or alone?
 - Many children ask if the procedure will hurt. It is very important to be honest and tell your child that it may be uncomfortable.
 - It's helpful to keep your child's hands busy to discourage them from reaching up to their face. Offer choices such as having your child sit on their hands, hold your hands, or hold a stress ball or fidget item.
 - Some children find it helpful to have someone count to ten, to hold their breath, or to take deep breaths.
 - Does your child want anything to divert focus (e.g., watching a video, talking, singing), or does your child want to be quiet and close their eyes?
 - Your child can also choose which nostril to swab, in order to give them a sense of control.



■ **My child has an upcoming planned admission but has already tested negative for COVID-19. Do they need to be re-tested prior to this admission?**

Discuss the details of your child's COVID-19 test and results with your physician or surgical team. They will help decide if re-testing is necessary based on where your child has been, if they have any symptoms and the current recommendations for Inova from CDC guidance.

■ **My child tested negative for COVID-19 at admission and is scheduled for a procedure/ surgery during the same hospitalization, is another COVID-19 test required?**

In a discussion with you and your child's care team at the hospital we will evaluate the timing of the previous COVID-19 test, how long it has been since your child had a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19, and if there were any potential exposures between tests. Based on this discussion we can determine if your child should retest to ensure the safety of your child, other patients and team members.

■ **The CDC recommends testing newborns born to mothers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Why, and are there exceptions?**

In order to protect our patients, families and team members and to align with recommendations from the CDC all newborns born to COVID-19 positive moms will be tested for COVID-19. If the baby is negative, a second test will be performed at 48 hours after birth, if you and your newborn have not yet been discharged home. If you have questions about testing criteria, please consult your care team.