

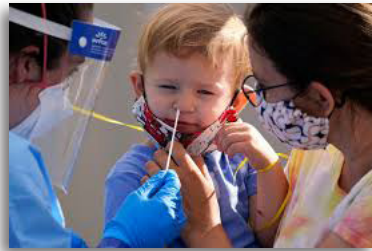
**PARENT LETTER**

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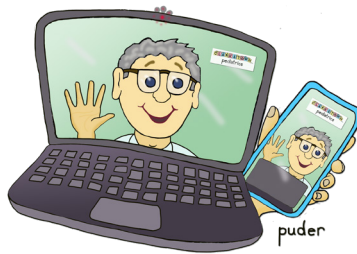


## My Child Has a Cold...Could It Be COVID?

by Gregg Rockower, MD



**Do I come in to have my child tested for every cough or sneeze?**



As schools re-open and as we start socializing again, we will see an increase in both common childhood infections and *COVID-19*. The symptoms of *COVID-19* can range from none (asymptomatic) to mild or to severe. Some children cough, get fever, and have trouble breathing but many do not. So what seems like a "common cold" can definitely be *COVID-19*.

You can decrease your family's risk of getting *Flu (influenza)*, *Strep*, *RSV* and a slew of other respiratory infections by following public health recommendations. Wearing a mask, washing hands, and keeping 6 feet or more away from others will help protect you from many infections not just *COVID-19*.

If your child has been exposed to a cold virus, then they may also have been exposed to *COVID-19*. Which one is more likely will depend on what is going on in the community. When the number of *COVID-19* cases is low, less than 1% positive in our area, most of the "colds" children get will just be common cold viruses. But if we start to see a wave of *COVID-19* in our area, many "colds" in children are likely to be *COVID-19*. Remember *Flu* symptoms can mimic *COVID-19*. *Influenza* can often be more dangerous for children than *COVID-19*. So this year it is even more important to protect your child with *Flu* vaccine (see page 4).

We are performing tests for *COVID-19*, *flu*, *strep*, and other viruses in our office. But should I come in to office and have my child tested every time they cough or sneeze? Wouldn't it be great if we could quickly and accurately test ourselves at home? Then we would know to isolate (quarantine) if we test positive. But that is not reality. So an important question to ask is, what will I do differently with the test result?

If your child appears sick and you need us to assist in their care, then you should definitely schedule a *TeleVisit* or office visit. If a positive or negative test will help decide whether or not to be in school, to visit a vulnerable friend or relative, or to assist in contact tracing, then your child should be tested.

So, if your child has cold symptoms, nasal congestion, runny nose, coughing, or fever, you need to act as if they have *COVID-19* if you do not test. They should be out of in-person school, they should be kept away from others, and you should consider who they have been exposed to. We can guide you to contact tracing assistance. As always, when you need help, we are here for you. This is your childrens' medical home and we'll get through this together!

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