



Dear patients and families,

March 27, 2020

At Boston Children's Hospital, we have no higher priority than the health and well-being of our patients, their families, and our staff.

Every day, we are reminded by news reports that the COVID-19 outbreak is an expanding global pandemic. All of us are coping with an extraordinary amount of rapidly changing information.

For the latest information and updates provided by Boston Children's related to COVID-19, please visit our website: [bostonchildrens.org/coronavirus](https://bostonchildrens.org/coronavirus).

Amid the crush of all this information, we want to take a moment and share with you some key facts about COVID-19, what you can do to protect yourself and your family, and what we at Boston Children's Hospital are doing to help contain the spread.

Let's start with what COVID-19 is.

A coronavirus is a common kind of virus that most often causes a cold. In December of last year, a new type of coronavirus was discovered that causes a much more serious illness known as COVID-19. Its symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It is spread through droplets, typically when an infected person coughs or sneezes, but can be spread on surfaces as well. As you have seen in the news, the number of cases in Massachusetts and the United States is growing daily.

Fortunately, children are not in the highest risk groups for COVID-19, according to the CDC. However, they can still spread the virus. We are still learning which children may have additional vulnerabilities. Older adults and people with serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and a suppressed immune system are at greater risk. If you think you or your child has been exposed to COVID-19, you should contact your health care provider right away.

You can protect your family by:

- Getting your kids to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer.
- Teaching your kids to cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the sleeve of their elbow or arm, not their hands. They should throw the used tissue into the trash immediately after use.
- Telling them to avoid touching their face, especially their mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Keeping your kids away from others who are sick, and keeping them home if they are ill.
- Social distancing, maintaining a distance of at least six feet from others.

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As part of the ongoing efforts to contain the outbreak of COVID-19 and limit its impact, Boston Children's Hospital is doing the following:

- All non-urgent and non-emergency surgeries, procedures, admissions, and clinic and research visits at all our locations are canceled. We plan to evaluate this decision every two weeks. All updates regarding clinic hours will be posted to our [COVID-19 Resource Page](#). We will continue to care for urgent and emergency patients. While no one knows just how long this will last, we are monitoring the situation closely. At this time, we are recommending that patients not be rescheduled for at least six weeks.
- As this situation unfolds, we may need to make changes to our visitor policy. Please check out [our website](#) for the most up-to-date guidelines.
- We are testing patients who meet a certain criteria in-house. Employee testing for those who meet certain criteria is also being performed.
- We have also temporarily closed several satellite locations and Boston Children's physicians' offices. If you have questions about upcoming appointments, please call your specialty clinic directly or call our COVID-19 hotline at 855-281-5730 or 617-355-4200.

The challenges we are facing today are unlike any we've experienced in past — and there is a good chance they will continue to grow before they subside. Yet together, we will overcome them and control and end this outbreak.

Doing so will require the combined efforts of many people and organizations, including you — our patients and families — who can help limit the spread by following the guidelines above. Together, all of us can play a part in beating this outbreak. When we do, it will be another reason for us to express again the enormous pride we take every day in serving patients and families like you.

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Fenwick  
Chief Executive Officer

Kevin B. Churchwell, MD  
President and Chief Operating Officer