

What to do if children show symptoms of illness and colds in schools and childcare settings

The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) adapted the testing criteria for children and adolescents in collaboration with the Swiss Society of Paediatrics in March 2021. This has an impact on the flow chart developed by the DVK which describes what to do if children and adolescents display symptoms of illness or colds at school or in childcare facilities. In view of the upcoming winter flu season, this guide on what to do if children show symptoms of illness and colds is to be made available to parents and schools. The attached flow chart has been developed in collaboration with the FOPH and on the basis of the latest research into how viruses spread in children.

What to do in children over six

For children and adolescents aged six or over, the same [apply](#) as for adults. If symptoms appear that are compatible with COVID-19, the child or adolescent must stay at home and get tested at the doctor's. If the test is positive, isolation is indicated. If the test is negative, the child/adolescent should stay at home until they have been free of fever for 24 hours (see the reverse of the accompanying flow chart).

This simplified procedure means no separate flow charts are necessary for primary and secondary school.

What to do in children under six

The process is more nuanced for symptomatic children aged under six. The attached algorithm is designed as an aid and guide here. The following points are important to note:

- Children who feel generally unwell should stay at home, whether or not they have a new high temperature of over 38.5°C. The parents should then contact their general practitioner. If the doctor is unable to diagnose anything else, the child should be tested. If the test is negative, they can return to school when they have been free of temperature for 24 hours.
- Children who feel generally well should stay at home initially if they have a new bad cough or temperature of 38.5°C or over. If the child is displaying other COVID-19 symptoms, a doctor should be consulted and – if there is no other diagnosis – the child should be tested.
- If the child has a high temperature or bad cough that lasts three days or more when they are otherwise feeling well and have no other symptoms, a doctor should be consulted and – if there is no other diagnosis – the child should be tested.
- If the child has a cold and/or sore throat with or without a slight cough but without a high temperature and generally feels well, they do not need to be kept at home or tested.

This algorithm describes the process to follow for children aged under six. It should be noted that as part of outbreak testing in schools or childcare settings, children without symptoms of all ages may also be tested.

The Swiss Society of Paediatrics operates an online tool (www.coronabambini.ch), which helps the parents of sick children assess their child's symptoms and decide whether to keep them at home. The tool is updated on an ongoing basis in line with the epidemiological situation. This is a supplementary service that parents can refer to and access.

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