

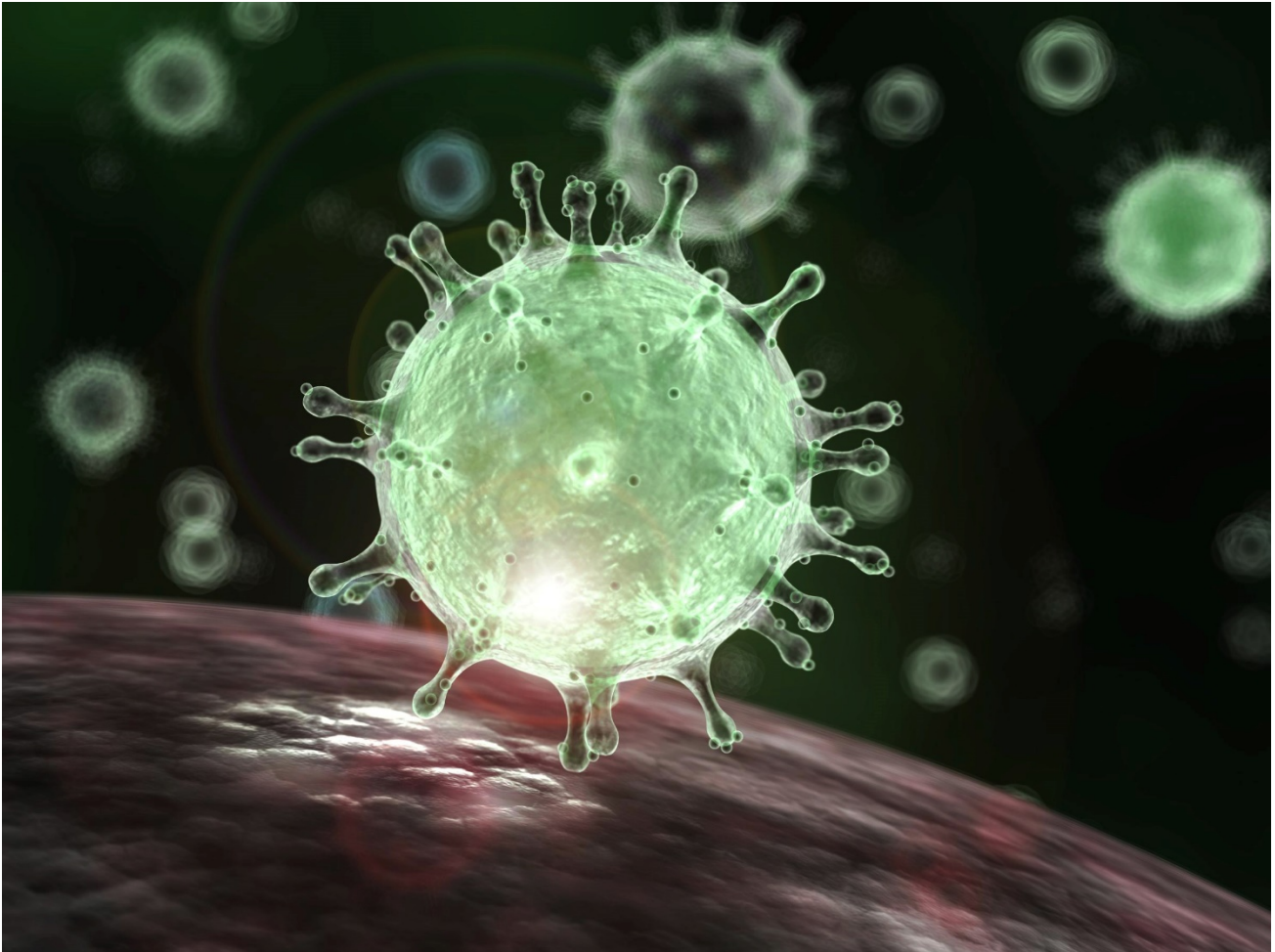
# TOUCHPOINT

PEDIATRICS, P.A.

## Novel Coronavirus in the News (COVID-19)

Update (3/31/20)

By Stuart Slavin, M.D., F.A.A.P.



Now that COVID-19 activity is widespread in our area, here are some important points to understand about your child and COVID-19:

- The vast majority of children who contract COVID-19 infection will simply have typical flu-like symptoms (fever, congestion and cough) which will seem just like any other “flu-like virus” and will go away on its own, just like other viruses. Sometimes the symptoms are even milder, or absent altogether.
- A small percentage of children who develop COVID-19 infection may develop more severe symptoms such as trouble breathing from their lungs, just as can happen with other viruses such as the flu or RSV. This is more likely to happen if a child has a history of asthma or wheezing, especially if their condition is not well-controlled.
- There is no specific treatment for this infection; the only treatment would be for the trouble breathing if present, just like for any other virus. And of course, just like with any other viral infection, antibiotics will not help at all.

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- At this point there is no office test for this infection. Currently, with limited testing ability, testing priority is being given to patients for whom the diagnosis would alter treatment or management. Examples include hospitalized patients, health care workers, or other high-risk patients, such as the elderly or those with other underlying health problems. Therefore, even if we examine your child, we will not be able to tell you if your child has this particular virus.
- If you or your child has fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms, the safest course of action is to assume you or your child might be infected with COVID-19 and isolate yourself accordingly, in order to protect other high-risk patients in the community. There is no reason to go to the ER for these mild symptoms, unless your child's symptoms are severe enough that you would bring them to the ER anyway (e.g. difficulty breathing).

If you or your child is sick and you want to try to pursue COVID-19 testing, you can call the Atlantic Health COVID-19 nurse triage hotline at 862-260-3199, to see if testing would be available and appropriate for your situation.

Our office is still open for patient visits, both well and sick, and we are sterilizing exam rooms between patients. If your child is sick with any respiratory symptoms, please call us before coming to our office, so that we can meet you before entering our main waiting room to try to limit the spread of infection. We would also ask any sick people (children and parents) to wear a mask, if available, while coming to the office.

We are also offering telemedicine visits for sick visits as an option for some concerns.

If your child has a history of asthma or wheezing illnesses, the best course of action, as always, is to make sure your child's asthma is under control, make sure your child is on his or her asthma controller medications if appropriate, and to make sure your child gets his or her flu vaccine every year. And to encourage frequent handwashing in your children during this, as well as any, disease season.

For more information about COVID-19, you can check the CDC's information page:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

And as always, with any illness, if you are concerned that your child is having trouble breathing, or if you have any other concerns about your child's health, you should contact us.