

If your school-aged child falls ill – instructions for parents

To prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, it is extremely important that children do not come to school while ill.

Typical symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, headache, nausea, diarrhoea, muscle ache, a sore throat, a runny nose, shortness of breath and the loss of sense of smell and taste. The only way to differentiate between the symptoms of COVID-19 and other viral diseases is a coronavirus test. Particularly in children, the symptoms of COVID-19 are often mild and short-lasting.

If a school-aged child or their family member develops even mild symptoms indicative of COVID-19, they must get tested for the coronavirus without delay.

In Helsinki, parents can book an appointment for a coronavirus test for their child by calling the coronavirus helpline, tel. 09 310 10024 (7–16 on weekdays) and the Medical Helpline, tel. 116 117, at other times. Adult residents of Helsinki can also book an appointment for a coronavirus test by completing the online coronavirus symptoms check-up at Omaolo.fi. Residents of other municipalities must contact their municipality's health care services.

The person exhibiting symptoms must stay home at least until they receive their test results. Family members who do not have any symptoms can continue to go to school, daycare and work while waiting for the test results, unless there is a strong suspicion that the family member waiting for the result is infected with COVID-19.

If the result of the coronavirus test is negative, your child can return to school once they are free of symptoms. Sometimes children may suffer from a runny nose or mild cough for a long time following a respiratory infection. If your child is otherwise well, these types of mild symptoms should not prevent them from returning to school as long as their test result is negative and their symptoms are clearly getting better.

If symptoms reappear or increase later, you will need to get your child tested again.

If the result of the coronavirus test is positive, your entire family must stay at home. In this case, further instructions will be provided by health care services.

If your school-aged child suffers from asthma or allergy symptoms, it is important to bring them under control with effective medication. However, your child does not need to be absent from school based on these types of mild, long-term symptoms typical of your child. That being said, you should not hesitate to get your child tested for the coronavirus if you feel that their symptoms include symptoms of infection.

Parents should also assess the situation of children who are known to suffer from migraines or stress-related stomach aches, for example. Your child does not need to be absent from school or get tested for the coronavirus based on these types of familiar, long-term symptoms, but if their symptoms change, do not hesitate to get them tested.

It is important to also prevent the spread of other infectious diseases besides COVID-19 so that there is enough testing capacity to get everyone with symptoms tested.

Epidemiologic operations
City of Helsinki