

# Guidance for Triage: COVID/ILI Concerns in Pediatric Patients

## Definition of COVID-19-like illness

1. Fever (100.4 degrees F or higher), with upper or lower respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, sore throat)
2. If no fever, cough or shortness of breath, low risk for COVID-19
3. Applies to all patients < 18 years of age

**NOTE:** An isolated runny nose or sore throat is NOT a common symptom of COVID-19.

**NOTE:** Exercise your judgment regarding empiric treatment for possible strep or influenza, as testing will not be performed in our practice locations for either at this time.

**If a pediatric patient has the above symptoms, proceed to assess if an ED visit or testing is required.**

## Previously well child

The majority of COVID-19 cases in children present with mild symptoms, and the children do quite well.

If there is concern that the child has a COVID-19-like illness (see above), but has mild symptoms and appears to be doing well, the child can be managed at home. In this case:

- Testing is not recommended.
- The child should be isolated until the following criteria are met:
  - It has been at least 7 days since the first symptoms appeared
  - There are no symptoms, including cough
  - The fever has been gone for at least 3 days without the use of fever-reducing medications, such as Tylenol or ibuprofen
- If the child's symptoms are getting worse, parents should call the pediatrician or take the child to an ED.

**If the child has more severe symptoms, including difficulty breathing, they should go to an ED.**

## Child with underlying medical condition

If the child has a COVID-19-like illness with mild symptoms, but also has other risk factors (e.g., immunocompromised; chronic heart, lung or kidney disease; diabetes), parents should contact the child's pediatrician or the pediatric specialist managing the child's condition. If their symptoms are more severe, the child should proceed directly to the ED.

## When to consider testing

In general, testing is not indicated for patients with mild COVID-19-like illness symptoms in otherwise well children. If the child has an underlying medical condition that places them at higher risk of complications from COVID-19, or lives in a household with a high-risk individual, testing can be considered. If testing is recommended, refer the patient to a Northwestern Medicine ED, or, if in Chicago, to Lurie Children's Hospital.