



Student Symptom Decision Tree FAQ

During this COVID-19 pandemic, how do you know when your student should go to school, stay home, see the doctor, or get tested? This FAQ will tell you how to screen a student for potential COVID-19 symptoms or exposure. You may also download a one-page [Student Symptom Decision Tree](#) which contains all the information below with easy-to-understand graphics.

What are low-risk, general symptoms?

They can include any of the following individually or in some combination of two or more: congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, headache, fatigue, and muscle or body aches.

What are high-risk, “red flag” symptoms?

These include a fever of 100.4 F or higher, cough, difficulty breathing, and loss of taste or smell.

How is “close contact” with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 defined?

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet or less of the person diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or longer on a day they were contagious.

What do I do if my student is having symptoms, but was not knowingly exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

- If they have one low-risk symptom for less than 24 hours, they need to stay home. They can return to school 24 hours after symptoms are gone (without fever-reducing medication).
- If they have one low-risk symptom for more than 24 hours, OR 2+ low-risk symptoms, OR 1 high-risk symptom, they need to stay home. Have them evaluated by a health care provider and a COVID-19 test is recommended.

My student’s health care provider confirmed an alternative diagnosis for the symptoms. When can my student return to school?

Your student may return to school after 24 hours without fever and with symptoms improving, or per condition diagnosed by the health care provider. A health care provider’s note must be on file. A COVID-19 test is not required.

My health care provider confirmed a negative COVID-19 test. When can my student return to school?

Your student may return to school after 24 hours without fever and with symptoms improving.

My healthcare provider confirmed a positive COVID-19 test. When can my student return to school?

Your student may return to school 10 days after their symptoms started as long as they have not had a fever in the last 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and their symptoms are improving. Any of your student’s close contacts should quarantine.

When can my student return to school if we don’t see a health care provider, or no COVID-19 test is done?

Your student may return to school 10 days after their symptoms started as long as they have not had a fever in the last 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and their symptoms are improving. Any of your student’s close contacts should quarantine.

What do I do if I am notified that my student has been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?

Keep your student home for 14 days from the last contact, unless symptoms develop. If symptoms develop, have a COVID-19 test performed. If a COVID-19 positive person lives in the same household, the exposed person cannot return to school until 14 days after the positive person is released from isolation.

This document is not intended to replace a clinician’s judgement. Diagnosis and treatment should be supervised by a clinician.