

## Message from AAP President Sally Goza, M.D., FAAP, on COVID-19

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**Editor's note:** For the latest news on coronavirus disease 2019, visit <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/01/28/coronavirus>.

As COVID-19 continues to spread in communities, pediatricians can prepare to handle suspected cases in their patient population in the same way they prepare for other infectious disease outbreaks, such as influenza or RSV. The same principles apply:

- Keep children out of the health care system if it's not necessary
- Advise individuals to stay home if they are sick.
- Review infection-control measures. This can include asking patients with symptoms to call ahead, so they can be evaluated in isolation from other patients.
- Collaborate with hospitals and health systems on local response and to prepare for surges.
- Check with local and state health departments for information on specific local and state responses.

We have also heard from members that children and adolescents in their practice have expressed fear and anxiety about the outbreak. Pediatricians can be a calm, reassuring voice that can help alleviate these fears.

As a general pediatrician myself who has been in practice through especially severe RSV and flu outbreaks, I understand how important it is to remain reassuring to worried parents, clear in my guidance and practical and transparent in my approach to talking to patients who are old enough to understand what's going on.

David Schonfeld, MD, FAAP, a member of the AAP Council on Disaster Preparedness and Recovery, recommends keeping the conversation straightforward and direct, while avoiding graphic details. More information is available in the [HealthyChildren.org article](#) on talking to children about disasters and other events in the news. He also offers advice specific to COVID-19 in this [interview for CNN](#).

AAP also offers general information for parents on COVID-19 in the [HealthyChildren.org article](#) authored by H. Cody Meissner, M.D., FAAP. This article will be updated to reflect the most recent information as the outbreak evolves.

AAP continues to be in close communication with leaders at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. We are committed to providing you with updates and information about practice recommendations and infection-control measures as it is developed.

Updated information will also be posted on the [Red Book Online Outbreaks](#) page and in [AAP News](#).

