

## AAP offers response and updates for members 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>.***

With news of the first possible instance of community spread of coronavirus has come raised anxiety, myriad questions and a need for guidance from a public health perspective. In response, the American Academy of Pediatrics is reassuring members of the steps they can take now and offering continued support as the outbreak evolves.

On Friday, Nancy Messonnier, M.D., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, reported that COVID-19 had been confirmed in a person who did not have relevant travel history or exposure to another known patient with COVID-19 in the U.S. The case was identified in California.

Since the outbreak began, the AAP has been working to stay abreast of all confirmed developments related to the global spread of COVID-19, and has been reporting them in [AAP News online](#) and on the [Red Book Online Outbreaks](#) page. AAP subject matter experts and staff will continue to be vigilant in efforts to develop and share information and guidance with members.

"We are in frequent communication with the experts at the CDC, as well as with the pediatricians on the AAP Committee on Infectious Diseases and the Council on Disaster Preparedness and Recovery to monitor the outbreak and steps we can take now in response to this novel coronavirus," said AAP President Sara "Sally" H. Goza, M.D., FAAP. "We are also advocating with Congress to make sure needed resources are made available when needed.

"The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians take the steps they would for any potential infectious disease outbreak, including preparing their offices to adopt standard infection-control practices, collaborating with their local hospital and health systems, and advising families in their practice to stay home from work, school and child care if they are sick. The AAP will continue to advise and update members as the situation evolves," said Dr. Goza.

Members also are encouraged to visit the [CDC website](#) to access a wealth of information pertaining to the virus — from identifying and treating infections, to preparedness for health care professionals.

### **Pediatric implications**

"Based on what we know, children have experienced a mild form of the disease and some have been hospitalized," said Ann-Christine Nyquist, M.D., FAAP, a member of the AAP Committee on Infectious

Diseases. With many questions remaining about the virus, she urged pediatricians and their patients to seek information only from trusted sources — the AAP, CDC and local and state health departments.

Dr. Nyquist offered the following guidance:

- Keep children out of the health care system if it's not necessary.
- Provide parents with succinct messages. See the [HealthyChildren.org article](#) authored by H. Cody Meissner, M.D., FAAP, for examples.
- Community pediatricians should work in collaboration with hospitals and health systems on their local response.
- AAP chapters should work with local and state health departments in partnership to inform community and state-specific responses.
- Community-based pediatricians should review infection-control measures. Stress that individuals should stay at home if they're sick.
- Hospitals should prepare for surges.

### **Advice for parents**

Parents should follow the same protocols now as during the cold and flu season, Dr. Nyquist said. “If they have a runny nose, they have a runny nose. If they have a difficult time breathing, they should seek care.

“Be practical and help our children and families get through what may — or may not — be a tough time,” she added.

### **Resources**

- [Information from the CDC on coronavirus](#)
- [Preparedness checklist for pediatric practices](#)
- [Information for health care professionals](#)
- [Community Mitigation Guidelines to Prevent Pandemic Influenza — United States, 2017](#)
- [Information from the World Health Organization on coronavirus](#)
- [Information from the AAP Red Book](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org](#)

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