



Returning to school or day care for the child with respiratory disease

We understand that back-to-school is a cause for some concern in many parents of patients at the Montreal Children's Hospital and want to provide our families with our clear recommendations to help you better understand which patients should not return to the classroom.

The majority of the children followed by Respiratory Medicine at the Montreal Children's Hospital can go to school and should not develop significant symptoms from COVID-19. However, there are particular conditions or severe forms of disease in some children, and they may be more affected by COVID-19. As detailed below, we recommend those children stay home. **Please note that doctor's notes will only be provided to children who meet the criteria outlined in this document.**

For children returning to school, good hygiene including social distancing and frequent, effective handwashing for 20 seconds with soap and water are essential.

Healthy siblings can also return to school. Of course, they need to practice good hygiene, including social distancing at school and effective handwashing, after coming home.

In situations where we think your child can return to school, you can also return to work.

In situations where we recommend that your child stays home, you may still return to work but practice good hygiene, including social distancing at work, effective handwashing, and showering and changing clothes once you've arrived home.

To simplify matters, we would like to address the most common conditions of the patients we follow.

Asthma

Most children who have asthma can go to school. This includes children taking inhaled asthma medication and/or monteleukast and/or an injection for asthma.

The Canadian Thoracic Society has published guidelines concerning asthma and COVID- 19:
https://cts-sct.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Final_CTS-COVID-19-Asthma-Position-Statement.pdf

There is also a joint publication by the Association des Allergologues et Immunologues du Quebec, Association des Pédiatres du Quebec, and the Association des pneumologues de la province de Quebec :
<https://pg.poumon.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Position-commune-enfants-asthmatiques-et-d%C3%A9confinement-2020-05-04.pdf>

Who should not go to daycare or school?

- Children that often end up with a trip to the emergency room (once every 1-2 months) and/or hospitalization (2 or more in last year) should stay home.
- Children who have been admitted to the ICU (intensive care unit) with asthma in last 12 months should stay home.
- Those who regularly take prednisone for asthma (daily or every second day for months) should stay home. This includes prednisone/prednisolone/dexamethasone/cortisol pills or liquid by mouth.

Cystic Fibrosis



The international data available to date has not demonstrated major difficulties for most people with Cystic Fibrosis. However, there are some people with Cystic Fibrosis who should stay home:

- Children with less than 60% lung function (your nurse can tell you this if you do not know);
- Children with a recent large decrease in lung function;
- Children with frequent hospitalizations;

Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia, other chronic lung disease in young children

These following children should stay home:

- Children less than 2 years of age who have been off supplemental oxygen for less than 1 year;
- Children with frequent hospitalizations;
- Children who do not tolerate viral infections, and these often lead to emergency room visits or hospitalization;
- Children with less than 60% lung function.

Children with repaired esophageal atresia and trachea-esophageal fistula (EA-TEF) who do not meet the above criteria can attend school.

Please consult the section on asthma if your child is older and has asthma.

Children with the need for Oxygen or Ventilatory Support

- If your child is on oxygen for any part of the day or night or an oxygen saturation monitor, they should stay home.
- Children with neuromuscular disease who require invasive or non-invasive ventilation during the night AND during the day should stay home.
- If your child has a tracheostomy and/or requires continuous invasive ventilatory support, they should stay home.

Children on CPAP for obstructive sleep apnea **can go to school or daycare if this is their only health condition.**

Primary Ciliary Dyskinesia

We don't know how people with this disease will react to COVID-19. Your child should stay home if they are frequently hospitalized, or have less than 60% lung function.

Sickle Cell Disease

Please refer to the recommendations from the Hematology division at the Montreal Children's Hospital:

https://www.thechildren.com/sites/default/files/returning_to_school_or_day_care_for_the_child_with_cancer_or_a_blood_disorder.pdf

Other conditions

If your child has one of the conditions listed below, they should stay home:

- less than 60% lung function;



- does not tolerate viral infections and often needs a trip to the emergency room (once every 1-2 months) and/or hospitalization (2 or more in last year);
- are otherwise immune-suppressed

If your child has another condition, and you have questions, please contact us by phone at 514- 412-4400 extension 22725 or by email at respmch@muhc.mcgill.ca.