



Returning to school for children with gastrointestinal disease

We understand that this is a very stressful time for everyone, particularly for parents with children who have chronic gastrointestinal problems. From what we know, most children, including those with chronic illnesses, who get sick from this virus have mild symptoms. We believe that is important for the majority of our patients to return to school for their overall well-being. We also recommend the wearing of masks throughout the day other than when eating lunch. It is also important for all household members to **employ good hand hygiene**, and other strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19. Household members should **adhere to public health physical distancing recommendations** outside of the home.

However, there are some children who may be more affected by COVID-19 and who should stay home. We provide some general recommendations below depending on your child's underlying health problem.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

The majority of children with IBD can return to school/daycare. At present the only group recommended to NOT return to school/daycare if possible:

- Children who are taking high dose steroids (prednisone 20mg per day or more for older children or more than 0.5mg/kg per day for younger children)
- Children who are on a combination of 3 immunosuppressive medications

If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at your child's school, or your child had direct contact with someone with COVID-19, your child should stay home from school for at least 14 days and you should speak with your local public health office.

If your child has other illnesses that put him/her at risk of severe complications due to COVID-19, you should speak to your primary care doctor about whether it is safe to return to school.

Celiac Disease

- Most children with celiac disease can return to school/daycare. If your child has any other medical conditions, please discuss this with your family doctor or pediatrician.

Esophageal Atresia/Tracheoesophageal Fistula

- If your child has chronic respiratory symptoms please discuss this with your lung specialist. If they do not have chronic respiratory symptoms, they would be considered safe to return to school.

Chronic Liver Disease

Patients with autoimmune hepatitis who are taking prednisone at a dose of 20mg per day or higher should stay home from school.

If your child is under evaluation for a liver transplant, please discuss with your physician whether it is safe for them to return to school.

Eosinophilic Esophagitis

- Most children with eosinophilic esophagitis can return to school/daycare. If your child has any other medical conditions, please discuss this with your family doctor or pediatrician.