

Dear Community Pediatric Provider,

Just like many of your offices, the emergency departments at University of Maryland Upper Chesapeake Health (UM UCH) are seeing an early increase of viruses and illnesses in our pediatric patients. Typically seen during the winter months, these viruses include enterovirus, rhinovirus, parainfluenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Additionally, there is a rising number of flu and COVID positive patients among those under the age of 18. We are looking to collaborate with you through what has the potential to be a very busy cold and flu season, in the hopes that teamwork will help us navigate these next few months. As always, our goal is to provide safe, quality care to our youngest patients.

UM UCH—which includes both UM Upper Chesapeake Medical Center in Bel Air and UM Harford Memorial Hospital in Havre de Grace—has been proactively planning for a busy winter by increasing supplies, equipment, and staffing specific to our pediatric population.

We know that many local families look to their trusted pediatric providers for guidance and we hope that you are able to help us spread some educational information that will benefit families during this cold and flu season. Please share this information with your patients in the best way you see fit—office handouts, social media, etc. Important points to emphasize include:

- Reminding families to wash hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home if anyone in the household is feeling sick
- Encouraging families to wear masks in crowded situations or when appropriate
- Recommending that all eligible family members receive a COVID-19 vaccine and their annual flu vaccination
- Ensuring that all childhood immunizations are up to date
- Reminding families to reach out to you, as their pediatric provider, with questions and issues, and to utilize your after-hours phone numbers when appropriate

It is also important to educate families on utilizing urgent care facilities in the area (such as UM Urgent Care, [umuch.org/urgentcare](http://umuch.org/urgentcare)). All local urgent care facilities are equipped to see pediatric patients for non-life-threatening issues. For emergencies, families should call 911 and know that all emergency departments are equipped to handle patients of all ages, regardless of where they live.

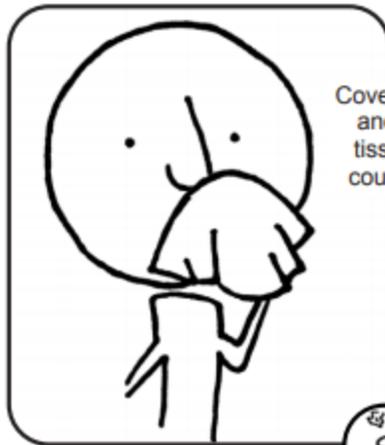
We look forward to working together over these next few months and continuing our partnership moving forward. We hope you and your staff remain healthy during these upcoming winter months.

Sincerely,

Emergency Department and Pediatric Leadership Team

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

# Cover your Cough

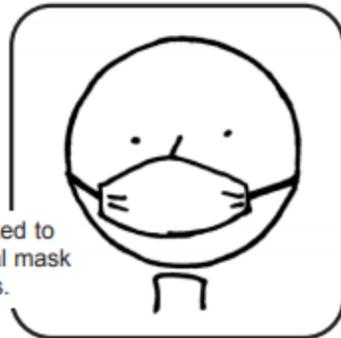


Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze

or  
cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.



Put your used tissue in the waste basket.



You may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.

## Clean your Hands

after coughing or sneezing.



Wash with soap and water

or  
clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.



Minnesota Department of Health  
717 SE Delaware Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
612-676-5414 or 1-877-676-5414  
[www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)



Minnesota  
Antibiotic  
Resistance  
Collaborative



ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONALS IN  
INFECTION CONTROL AND EPIDEMIOLOGY

## WHEN TO GO TO YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

As a general rule of thumb, **turn to your pediatrician's office first—even after hours.** Most pediatrician offices have an after-hours call line to help parents decide whether their child needs to be seen right away or if the issue can wait to be treated the next day during regular hours by the primary care provider.

**Common ailments that can typically wait until the next day when you're able to make an appointment with your pediatrician include:**

- Ear pain
- Vomiting
- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Runny nose
- Eye drainage
- Sore throat
- Fussy baby
- Fever in children over 1 year



## WHEN TO GO TO URGENT CARE

When your primary care physician's office is closed and you need some peace of mind, visit an urgent care. Urgent cares are set up to assist **patients with injuries or illnesses that do not appear to be serious or life-threatening**, but can't wait until morning.

**Common conditions that can be treated at urgent care include:**

- Minor illness or injury
- Fractures or broken bones that are not crooked and do not cause severe pain
- Worsening fever in infants ages 2 months to 1 year
- Sprains or minor pains
- Minor burns
- Minor asthma
- Small cuts



## WHEN TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

By contrast, emergency departments (EDs) are for people with life-threatening needs. Take your child to an ED anytime you think **the problem needs immediate attention.**

**Take your child to the ED for the following conditions:**

- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Blue or purple lips, skin or fingernails
- Chest or stomach pain or pressure
- Seizures
- Animal, snake or human bites
- Severe bleeding or burns
- Head, spinal cord or eye injuries
- Infants under 2 months of age with a fever
- Signs of allergic reaction such as hives; swelling of the face, lips, eyes or tongue; fainting or trouble breathing
- Uncontrolled pain



## COVID-19 compared to other common conditions

SYMPTOM	COVID-19	COMMON COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES
Fever	Common	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Dry cough	Common	Mild	Common	Sometimes
Loss of smell and taste	Sometimes	Common	Common	Common
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	X	X	Common
Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common	Sometimes
Aches, muscle pains	Sometimes	Mild	Common	X
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	X
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Chills, repeated shaking	Sometimes	Rare	Common	X
Diarrhea, vomiting	Rare	X	Sometimes*	X
Swollen toes	Rare	X	X	X
Runny nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	X	Common	Sometimes	Common

\*Sometimes for children

Sources: CDC, WHO, American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

INSIDER