



Briefing on Surge in Children's Hospitals

Key Messages

- We are seeing a large increase in cases of respiratory viruses affecting children across California, including increases in respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu and COVID.
- One main driver of hospitalizations among children right now is RSV. RSV is a common infection among children. In most children, the illness usually causes mild cold-like symptoms, and they recover well in a week or two. In some cases, however, – especially in children under a year old – RSV can become more problematic, and children can sometimes need a higher level of care.
- To help prevent respiratory viruses, we encourage everyone to adopt tried-and-true public health strategies. These include:
 - Ensuring you are up-to-date with your COVID-19- vaccines/boosters and flu shots. It's important to note that all children ages 6 months and older are eligible for both COVID and flu vaccines.
 - Wearing a mask indoors, especially in crowded settings.
 - Washing your hands with warm soap and water for 20 seconds often.
 - Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, not your hands.
 - Staying home from work or school if you are sick.
 - Drinking lots of fluids and stay hydrated.

- Avoiding close contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, and sharing cups and eating utensils, with others.
- Cleaning frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and mobile devices.

In addition, to help lessen the strain on our health care delivery system, we:

- Encourage parents to access the right care at the right place. For non-life-threatening issues, call nurse advice line, call your pediatricians office to schedule visit, or go to urgent care. For life threatening emergencies such as difficulty breathing, go to the Emergency Department.
- Support continuing the current regulatory flexibilities for hospitals that are made possible by the state's public health emergency declaration. These flexibilities include enabling hospitals to expand space to care for more patients and allow hospitals to hire nurses from out of state.
- Finally, we want to extend our appreciation to all of the doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists and others who are doing such outstanding work to treat children at this time.