



**PPS – PIDSP Joint Advisory for
Parents/Adult Caregivers on the
Prevention of COVID-19 Infection in
Children for Settings Outside the Home
02 December 2020**



Globally and in the Philippines, COVID-19 in the pediatric age group (<19years old) is less common compared to adults. However, children and adolescents are susceptible to and can transmit SARS-CoV-2. They are primarily infected via close contact with people infected with the virus. There is some evidence that children with COVID-19 are capable of transmitting the virus to adults and other children. While COVID-19 in children usually presents with mild symptoms, some develop severe and critical disease requiring hospitalization with others resulting to death.

The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has recently announced that minors will be allowed to go to shopping malls as long as they are accompanied by their parents, with concerned local government units expected to issue the relevant ordinances on the matter. Since the possibility of children getting infected from adults with COVID-19 is established and some evidence have pointed that children are likewise capable of transmitting the SARS-CoV-2 to susceptible individuals regardless of age, it is strongly recommended by pediatricians for children to remain home to minimize the risk of getting infected and lower viral transmission. As responsible parents or adult caregivers, they should realize that risks of acquiring COVID 19 far outweigh the benefits for children when they are brought to shopping malls. If parents or other adult caregivers still decide to bring their children outside of their homes, the following PPS-PIDSP recommendations may be considered to steer clear of an upsurge in COVID-19 cases and to supplement the minimum health standards set by the government, i.e. wearing of face mask and face shield, frequent handwashing, and physical distancing.

1. Children and adolescents shall be supervised by their parents or other adult caregivers in settings outside the home to ensure that they are compliant with minimum health standards for the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 infection and transmission. Ensure that standards are consistently followed by both adults and children once outside the home, including when using public transportation. Adults shall communicate to the child or adolescent the importance of compliance to these standards.
2. Outside trips shall be planned well so that the necessary preparations for infection prevention are done. Avoid peak hours and crowded areas. Avoid going to localities with high rates of transmission. Choose outdoor facilities or establishments with good ventilation. Pack soap for handwashing, hand

sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, extra masks and face shields, and a resealable bag to store the mask and while not in use (e.g. while eating or drinking). Consider also packing your own utensils should you decide to eat outside. Visit establishments that are compliant to health standards set by the health authorities.

3. Children and other family members who are sick shall stay at home. Children who are immunocompromised (cancer, primary/secondary immunodeficiency conditions, on chemotherapy, on prolonged steroid therapy,etc.), with medical conditions (chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, congenital heart disease, diabetes mellitus,etc.) that make them vulnerable to COVID-19, and those who cannot properly wear a mask and face shield, shall stay at home.
4. Children (2 years of age or older) and their accompanying adults shall wear masks when in public. Ensure that masks are worn correctly, consistently, and safely. Cloth masks or surgical masks may be used and shall properly cover the nose down to the chin. Face shields shall also be worn correctly and consistently.
5. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. Children shall be supervised to ensure they are doing handwashing correctly. Avoid touching surfaces if possible, wash hands afterwards.
6. Maintain physical distancing of at least 1 meter from people who are not your household members. Avoid people who are sick and coughing. If possible, avoid interactions with people outside of your household contacts. Avoid activities where close contact is possible (i.e. playground activities, sports, videoke sessions, etc) and avoid touching common surfaces that may be contaminated (eg. elevator buttons, hand railings, etc.)
7. Encourage toilet use before leaving the home and try to minimize using public toilets. Should the need to use a public restroom arise, maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from others, keep masks on, and wash hands with soap and water immediately after.
8. Do proper cough etiquette when coughing or sneezing.
9. Once back at home, ensure proper mask disposal and handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content.
10. For older children, encourage taking a shower upon reaching home from the mall; for younger ones, sponge bath may be done by parents.

11. Strictly abide by the mall establishment's screening and contact tracing procedures.

Observe for the development of COVID-19 symptoms among household members who have gone outside the home. Common symptoms of COVID-19 in children include fever, cough, rhinorrhea and nasal congestion, myalgia and fatigue, sore throat, shortness of breath, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, and rash. Should a household member develop symptoms, isolate and call your doctor or local healthcare providers for advice.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.
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3. UNICEF. Staying safe outside during COVID-19. Accessed at <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/staying-safe-outside-during-covid-19>.
4. Journal of Pediatrics. Pediatric Sars-CoV 2: Clinical Presentation, Infectivity, and Immune Responses. Yonker, LM,et.al. Published on-line Aug 20, 2020.