

Preparing your child for COVID-19 testing

If your doctor requests your child receive a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) test, it might help to let your child know what to expect. Give honest and simple information to help them understand and lessen their stress.

Below are some tips from our Child Life specialists.

What do I tell my child?

Give a simple explanation about the coronavirus. You can say something like, “Most kids do not have the virus. But if you do have the virus, the doctors and nurses will know what to do and wear to keep you as safe and healthy as possible.”

What will my child see?

Tell your child they will see people wearing blue or yellow gowns, along with gloves, masks, hats, goggles and clear face shields. These clothes will help keep everyone clean and safe. For younger kids, you can compare these outfits to storm troopers or even minions!

What will my child feel?

Tell your child, “They will rub the inside of the back of your nose and/or throat with a long skinny cotton swab.” Be honest by telling your child that it will feel uncomfortable, but reassure them that the test is very quick. Explain that their eyes may water and they may feel the need to sneeze or cough.

How can I help my child?

Whether the test is being done in an exam room or in the car, we encourage you to provide “comfort positioning” and/or hold your child’s hands. This will give your child a sense of safety and help remind him to not move his head or reach for the swab during the test.



Comfort positioning



Make a plan! Tips and tricks:

- Take slow deep breaths.
- Close your eyes.
- Hum during the nose swab.
- Hold or squeeze each other’s hands.
- Sit on your hands.
- Make an animal “roar” sound during throat swab.
- Bring a favorite comfort item to hug like a blanket or stuffed animal.
- Wiggle your toes as fast as you can!
- Freeze like a statue!