

# COVID-19 FAQ

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Thank you for interest in learning about what you can do to protect children with CHD during this time. We share your concerns, and we are committed to ensuring the health of our patients.

## ***What is known and not known about how this virus affects children with congenital heart disease?***

Fortunately, children are typically not as severely as affected as adults when infected with COVID-19. As of April 3, 2020, children have represented ~1% of the 5831 confirmed cases in Georgia, with no known deaths among children. However, among adults, especially older adults, we do know that those with cardiovascular disease have a more severe case of COVID-19 when they are infected. Unfortunately, there is not any specific information available from anywhere at this time that is specifically related to children or adults with *congenital* heart disease. As such, the CDC at the current time is considering CHD as a condition that can *potentially* increase the risk of severe infection.

## ***What can I do at home?***

The best way to stay healthy is to prevent infection as much as possible. Washing hands, practicing social distancing, minimizing touching your face, and staying at home as much as possible are all good practices at the current time, especially for families with a child with a heart condition.

For children who require medications, the CDC advises asking your pharmacy for extra medication or to order more medication by mail. Consider a 2-week supply of prescription and over the counter medications, food and other essentials. Talk to your doctor if you have concerns about any of your medications. There has been some concern about certain medications worsening COVID-19. The American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and the Heart Failure Society of America recommended on March 17, 2020 that cardiac patients should continue all medicines prescribed by their doctor, including ACE-inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, and aspirin.

## ***What is Sibley doing in their clinics?***

At Sibley we are implementing strict measures to contain the spread of this virus. This includes extensive cleaning procedures, postponing any appointments or procedures that are not urgent, limiting the number of family members at visits, screening all patients and families, and prohibiting patients or family members with concerning symptoms from entering our clinics. When possible, we are encouraging telemedicine visits.

If your child's appointment or procedure has been postponed and you have concerns that your child's condition is worsening or not improving as you think it should, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We have nurses, advanced practice providers (Nurse Practitioners) and physicians available to address concerns as they arise.

## ***What should I do if my child develops symptoms?***

If your child develops symptoms such as fever, cough, diarrhea, vomiting and shortness of breath, call your primary care provider for instructions for when to seek care or testing or call the CHOA COVID-19 hotline at 404-785-7955. Stay at home except to get medical care and separate yourself as much as possible from family and friends. You can also check your child's symptoms with [CDC's COVID-19 Self Checker](#).

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People with CHD may already experience shortness of breath and have a bluish tint to their skin, lips and fingernails. If any of these symptoms worsen or if you or your family member with CHD begin to have trouble breathing or develop bluish lips or face, chest pain or pressure, confusion, or any other severe or worsened symptoms, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room immediately.

### ***All of this is stressing me out....are there any resources to help me cope?***

The outbreak of COVID-19 may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Managing risk, fear, and uncertainty in an evolving pandemic is difficult, and maintaining your emotional wellbeing is important. However, there are things you can do to help reduce your stress. Maintain a schedule, even while staying at home. Get exercise, eat healthy foods regularly, and get enough sleep. Additionally, connect with family and friends through phone and video chatting.

If you, or someone you care about, feel overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or if you feel like you want to harm yourself or others, please call either 911 or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 (TTY 1-800-846-8517).

[Learn more about reducing stress in yourself and others.](#)

[Talking with Children about COVID-19](#)

### ***What are some other useful resources?***

More information can be found at:

- CHOA COVID-19 information page: <https://www.choa.org/covid19>
- CHOA Kids at Heart Facebook Live event March 24, 2020 on Coronavirus and Children with CHD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dbs2CD-Gyw>
- Relevant CDC COVID-19 pages:
  - Main COVID-19 page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
  - Individuals at High Risk: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html>
  - Children and COVID-19: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor\\_1584387482747](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#anchor_1584387482747)
  - Pregnancy and COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>
- Adult Congenital Heart Association webinar on March 16, 2020 on Coronavirus and the CHD patient: <https://youtu.be/hou2qM1phVQ>