

To guardians of children in day care or school

What to do when your child becomes ill with a respiratory infection

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) released guidelines (14.9.2020) on what to do if a child develops a respiratory tract infection.

Once guardians determine that a child has symptoms of a respiratory tract infection, the child may not go to school or daycare.

A child should be brought to a test if a caregiver or health care professional concludes that the symptoms match those of a coronavirus infection. Typical symptoms of a coronavirus infection include a fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, muscle pain, fatigue, runny nose, nausea and diarrhoea, as well as a loss of smell and taste.

Even if the symptoms are mild, it's especially important to test a child immediately if they or a family member has been exposed to a confirmed case of coronavirus or the family has travelled abroad in the last 14 days.

If a child under school age has mild symptoms, the situation can be followed for a couple of days at home. The symptoms are considered mild if the child is energetic and has the energy to play even if they have a cold, cough and fever. A child with symptoms may not attend early childhood education.

If the symptoms disappear during the follow-up period, it is not necessary for child to attend a test. In this case, the child can return to school or daycare after one full symptom-free day. If the symptoms continue it's recommended to find out if they are caused by the coronavirus.

Schoolchildren get ill less than small children do and therefore they are more likely to have a coronavirus infection. A corona test is always necessary if a schoolchild or young person has coronavirus symptoms.

If a child sneezes intermittently, has a runny nose brought on by allergies, or only gets the sniffles when outdoors and not inside, he or she can still go to school and daycare normally, as long as his or her general condition is otherwise normal and there are no symptoms of infection.

If a child attends a coronavirus test and receives a negative result, he or she can return to school or daycare as soon as their symptoms are clearly subsiding, even if they have not completely disappeared.

If a test is taken but the result is delayed, the child can return to school or daycare after one symptom-free day in cases where the child has not, as far as anyone knows, been exposed to a confirmed case of coronavirus, and no one in the family has travelled abroad in the last 14 days.

If several family members are ill at the same time, and the adults receive negative coronavirus test results, it's not necessary to test the children in the family. If only the children have symptoms, it's

enough to test one child. Young people and adults with symptoms should always be tested even if the child receives a negative test result.

If a child's respiratory tract infection symptoms continue, it is not necessary to test the child repeatedly as long as the symptoms remain the same.

Schools and day care centres may not require proof of a negative test result.

Source: thl.fi, 14.9.2020

Helsinki's Coronavirus Helpline, tel. 09 310 10024, daily 8-18.