



UT Health
Rio Grande Valley™

Preparing Your Child for Drive-Thru COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Testing

If your child's healthcare provider has recommended drive-thru testing for the new coronavirus (COVID-19), you may want to consider preparing them ahead of the experience. During this time of uncertainty, it's important to provide honest information to increase your child's sense of security.

1. First, review simple language you can use to talk with your family about the new coronavirus.
2. You'll also want to prepare your child for what the medical staff will be wearing and why.



Suggested language:

"You will see people wearing gowns, gloves and masks. This is to help keep everyone as safe as possible."

3. Prepare your child for what the Q-tip used to collect the sample will look like and what it will be used for.



Suggested language:

"Someone will use a long Q-tip to rub the inside of your nose for about 10 seconds. This Q-tip will be sent to a doctor who will learn how to help your body."

4. When the test is performed with your child in the car or car seat:



If you are able to sit next to your child during the swabbing it will give them a sense of comfort. If you are not, unbuckle yourself and turn around to face the child to provide reassurance. After the test is completed it might be helpful to pull over in a safe place and comfort your child.

5. You may want to make a plan to help your child cope during the test. Validate your child's feelings. Consider saying, *"It's OK to feel upset about this. Let's figure out a way we can get through this together."*

Suggested coping options:

- Listening to soft music
- Counting
- Deep breathing
- Cold drink for afterward

Focus on things your child has a choice in. For example, *"What could we bring with us to help?"*

Suggested items to bring:

- Electronic device
- Favorite blanket
- Stuffed animal
- Favorite book or toy

Let your child know that it's OK to not like getting the test, but that they need to hold as still as possible.

Suggested language:

"Try to hold your head still like a soldier."

"Let's pretend we've been frozen like Elsa."

"It's important to keep your head, arms and legs as still as possible."

Talking to Children about COVID-19

Your child has probably heard about COVID-19. To reduce worry, use the following tips as guidelines when speaking to them about the virus.

Provide honest and simple information

To help clarify misconceptions, ask your child what they know.

Ways to introduce the illness may be to identify flu-like symptoms associated with COVID-19.

It's okay to not know all answers. Suggest looking up the answers together if appropriate.

Reassure your child

- Explain what adults are doing to help to fight COVID-19
- Validate their feelings and try working together to identify coping options.
- Your child may hear untrue or exaggerated news. Reassure them that you are a vital source of information.
- Talk about masks, explaining that people are wearing them over their nose and mouth to protect from germs is a proactive way to beat COVID-19.
- Explain that if family members becomes sick, a doctor will work to get them feeling better again.
- If your child's daycare, school or activities are closed or cancelled, explain that it is to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Give your child a sense of control

Have your child be proactive in the fight against COVID-19 by partaking in the following:

- Washing hands after sneezing, coughing, using the restroom
- Suggest washing hands up to 20 seconds
- Encourage creative activities in the time of quarantine
- Help them keep healthy routines especially mealtime and bedtime
- Keep them updated on any age-appropriate COVID-19 developments

Watch for changes in behavior

Your child may respond differently depending on their age and development. Educate yourself on the reactions that might occur so you can support them.

If you become increasingly concerned about your child's behaviors or emotions, contact their provider.