



This communication is intended to provide timely and important information to our municipal leaders, health system partners, health and hospital foundations, and other community based organizations. Please feel free to distribute among your stakeholders as appropriate.

## Value of the Weekly SHA Update: We Want to Hear From You

We are looking for your input as to the value of the SHA Weekly Stakeholder Update. Please click on the link below to complete the survey. The survey should take no more than 2-3 minutes of your time. Your opinion matters to us. We want to ensure that you and your organizations are receiving the information that you need to stay informed. Thank you for the time to assist us.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6VJQKMQ>

## COVID-19 Testing: A child's perspective



*Smith, age 8, waits at the Regina testing site.*

Taking a sick child in for a COVID-19 test can be stressful. The fear of the unknown to a child, and their parents, can create anxiety, especially if the child has symptoms that could be related to COVID-19. But you will fear no more once you hear what these kids had to say about their COVID-19 test.

“It was really no big deal. It tickled the inside of my nose and then it was done,” says 11-year-old Aven, who had a test done after developing a fever, sore throat, runny nose and headache a few days after a small family wedding.

“I was nervous to go but my dad had to get one done, too. He had been for one already and said he giggled because it tickled. He was right.”

When Smith, aged 8, had to go for a COVID-19 test he said, “I cried when my mom told me I had to go.” Smith developed cold-like symptoms in early August, and with both parents working in health care and emergency services, his mom

insisted on a COVID-19 test. Smith says that other kids shouldn't be scared to go. “It was shorter than I thought it would be. It just tickled a bit, and my eyes watered a bit, but it didn't hurt at all!”

Aven and Smith are not alone in thinking the test is “no big deal.” Many kids have similar reactions to have their nose swabbed. Beth, age 8, had to get a COVID test because she was ill and her grandparents are high-risk. She said, “It was way easier than getting a needle.” And Kellsey, age 9, said, “It was fun! When they put the stick up my nose, I giggled because it tickled a lot.”



As children return to school and influenza season rears its head, more children tend to develop cold or flu-like symptoms and may need to be swabbed for COVID-19. If your child needs to get tested, let them know that it might tickle, and as Beth said, it is way better than getting a needle!

## If your child has COVID-19

It's crossed the mind of every parent since the pandemic was declared earlier this year: how will I care for my child if he or she gets COVID-19?

Everyone can take simple steps to lower the risk of infection – things like physical distancing, washing your hands often, staying home more, and wearing non-medical masks if physical distancing isn't possible. If, however, children do show symptoms of COVID-19, follow these steps, as suggested by the Government of Canada, to protect yourself and the other children who may be in your household:

- Monitor your child's symptoms as directed by your health-care provider. If your child develops severe symptoms, call 911 and ensure your health-care providers know your child has or is suspected to have COVID-19.
- Keep hands clean: Wash your hands and those of your child often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after any type of contact with the child and after removing gloves. You can also use an alcohol-based sanitizer. Dry with paper towels or reusable towels (replace when wet and do not share). Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and encourage your child not to touch their face, either.
- Avoid spreading infection: Keep your child in your home or in a monitored outdoor space. They should not play with friends, go to school, visit public areas, or be within two metres of others. Encourage them to use tissues or cough and sneeze into their elbows. Don't share personal items like toothbrushes, towels, bed linen, utensils or electronic devices, or food and drink. Use a separate bathroom if possible. If not, put the toilet lid down before flushing. If you're a breastfeeding mother, continue breastfeeding; if you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilize the equipment carefully before each use and do not share bottles or a breast pump.
- Keep your environment clean: Wash your reusable facemasks, and place used gloves and other contaminated disposable items in a lined container and secure the contents. Dispose of them with other household waste. Place possibly contaminated laundry into a container with a plastic liner and do not shake. Wash with laundry soap and hot water, and dry well. Clothing and linens belonging to the child can be washed with other laundry. Wear gloves and a non-medical mask when in direct contact with contaminated laundry. Disinfect hard surfaces.
- Protect yourself: Only one healthy person should care for the child. People at higher risk of serious illness should not care for the child – elderly persons, those with chronic health conditions or compromised immune systems. Wear a mask, gloves and eye protection if you have to be within two metres of the child.





- Monitor yourself for symptoms and follow advice provided by the local health authority about self-isolation. If you develop symptoms, call HealthLine 811 for further instructions.
- Maintain supplies: Masks, medical or otherwise; eye protection (face shield or goggles) for use by caregiver, disposable gloves, disposable paper towels, tissues, waste container with plastic liner, thermometer, over-the-counter medication to reduce fever (e.g. ibuprofen or acetaminophen), running water, hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60 per cent alcohol, dish soap, regular laundry soap, regular household cleaning products, one-step cleaner/disinfectant, hard-surface disinfectant, or if not available, concentrated (five per cent) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution, alcohol prep wipes or appropriate cleaning products for high-touch electronics.

## How to keep your family safe if you are diagnosed with COVID-19



It's a scenario that's run through the minds of many parents over the past few months – how will they care for their children if they contract COVID-19? Taking precautions to avoid contracting COVID-19, like washing your hands often, physical distancing when out of the house, avoiding touching your face when you're out, and wearing a non-medical mask when you cannot physically distance are working very well at preventing the spread of the virus in Saskatchewan, noted Dr. Simon Kapaj, Medical Health Officer for Saskatoon.

“If you respect those principles, the risk of contracting the virus is low,” he noted. “You protect all your loved ones, including your babies, if you do this.”

“We ask families, if one of them shows symptoms of COVID-19, to self-isolate. That means using a separate bedroom and separate bathroom for two weeks. If you have to share space, make sure the room has good air flow by opening the window to increase air circulation. Improving ventilation helps remove respiratory droplets from the air.” That's 100 per cent isolation – staying away from all family members 100 per cent of the time for 14 days or until symptoms are gone. That is sometimes hard to do, especially in the case of a single parent, or when both parents show symptoms. “But if you do happen to get COVID-19, it doesn't mean your kids will automatically get it as well. You can protect them,” noted Kapaj. “If the parent is too ill to care for the child, they should see if there is a caregiver outside of the home with whom the child can stay. The caregiver should not be someone who is at [higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19, as the child has likely been exposed to the virus.”

If you do have to care for your child while you are COVID-19 positive, you can still reduce the risk of transmission by:

- Frequent handwashing, and wearing gloves if you're caring for small children.
- Wear a mask at home.
- Don't share – towels, beds, electronic devices, utensils, food or drink.
- Sterilize everything, especially in common spaces.
- Put the toilet seat down before flushing, in case droplets come out of the toilet and aerosolize, as it is speculated is possible.



## Service Resumption

As Saskatchewan Health Authority services resume, notifications will be updated on the SHA website. The list on our web page is updated regularly, however service impacts at our facilities can change and these changes may not immediately be reflected on our page. We encourage you to phone in advance before travelling to any facility to confirm the services that are available.

[View all service resumptions on the SHA website.](#)

## CONCOR-1 Clinical Trial In Progress

The CONCOR-1 clinical trial is looking at whether the antibodies in human plasma from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 infection will help treat patients hospitalized with a COVID-19 respiratory illness.

“There is currently no proven treatment for COVID-19 infection. Our goal is to understand if the infusion of 500 ml of COVID-19 convalescent plasma will help reduce the severity of illness in patients hospitalized with COVID-19 who require oxygen support, but do not yet need a breathing tube,” said Dr. Oksana Prokopchuk-Gauk, Transfusion Medicine Physician, Saskatchewan Health Authority.

Over 50 hospital sites are participating in the CONCOR-1 trial in Canada, with Saskatoon and Regina open for patient enrolment since the end of July. “We are relying on our clinical colleagues to contact us if they have patients with COVID-19 under their care who may be interested in hearing more about the CONCOR-1 trial,” noted Prokopchuk-Gauk.

For more information on CONCOR-1, please visit the [website](#), or contact Saskatchewan site Principal Investigators:

- Saskatoon – [Dr. Oksana Prokopchuk-Gauk](#)
- Regina – [Dr. Donna Ledingham](#)

Information about convalescent plasma donation can be found on the [COVID-19 website](#).