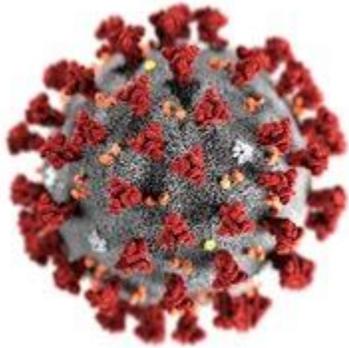


The Dilemma of Testing for COVID 19

Many of us are worried about contracting and/or spreading COVID-19. It has certainly disrupted all our lives this year! Parents are struggling with many decisions – in person vs remote learning, attending sporting events and playdates, going out to eat at a restaurant, working from home vs going in to work, to name a few. One of the things we at Pediatric Associates PSC find challenging is who to test and how.



We are recommending a visit with a provider either in person or by a telemedicine video visit so we can discuss your particular situation and decide together the best course of action. As you will see below there are a lot of important pieces of information that will help us best care for your child and provide the best advice for you on how to interpret symptoms, testing and results, and most importantly things to watch for that would be concerning for a serious illness.

Here are a few important definitions regarding COVID 19 illness:

Asymptomatic: Someone not showing any signs of COVID 19: No congestion, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, fever, loss of sense of smell or taste.

Presymptomatic: Someone who has the virus but is early in the course and not showing any symptoms yet.

Symptomatic: Someone who has symptoms of COVID 19.

Should I get a test and if so what kind of test?

Rapid tests:

There are several now on the market based on saliva, or various nasal swabs. The positive attribute of this test is quick results, but the negative attribute is the results are not as reliable as we would like. Furthermore, the supplies are limited and hard to get.

Molecular and PCR tests:

These test results are more accurate, but take longer to perform and require more specialized equipment. Results can take anywhere from several hours up to 3-4 days. Supplies are still a challenge for some offices and hospital systems. This is the system Cincinnati Children's is using.

What Does Pediatric Associates PSC Recommend?

Currently we recommend testing be done at Cincinnati Children's Hospital with the PCR test. This is the most accurate test and current turn-around time is 24 to 48 hours. We recommend doing a test if you or your child is in one of the following categories:

- Symptoms of COVID 19 with a known contact with a positive case
- Household contact of a positive case
- Close contact of a positive case (> 15 minutes less than 6 feet apart)
- Symptoms of COVID 19 but no known contact with a positive case

The last category is the most challenging. This is because most people with symptoms do not have COVID and have some other virus. However, it is very challenging to exclude COVID 19 without doing the test, since many children have very mild symptoms. A negative test is reassuring but if you have a close contact you will still be required to quarantine for 14 days from the most recent contact.

We will continue to update you as more information is available and as it applies to our patients in this time of returning to school, work, sports, and many other activities in which children and families may be exposed or become sick. We also recommend that everyone get a flu shot to help protect you as we approach the beginning of our annual flu season.