

# FAMILY TIPSHEET: Helping kids under 12 and ineligible for vaccines to stay healthy and safe during school

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Based on when you are viewing this tipsheet, the information may not be the most up to date. Please refer to the date this tipsheet was last updated, at the end of the document. You can also access this tipsheet online at [hollandbloorview.ca/covid-19-tipsheets](https://hollandbloorview.ca/covid-19-tipsheets)

As students prepare to head back to school this fall, many parents, particularly those whose children are under 12 and can't get vaccinated as yet, may be wondering how best to keep their children safe and healthy.

The Infection and Prevention Control Team at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital has these following tips and reminders for parents:

## Preparation

1. Prepare your child for going back to in-person school: Address their fears and anxiety; do not push them to go to in-person school if they're not ready.
2. Watch your own body language. Be careful how you come across, and be aware of your tone and your feelings of sending them back to in-person learning opposed to online school.
3. Find out what your school board and individual school is doing to protect your child and teacher.
  - a. For example, ask what they are doing for screening, masking, social distancing, reducing class sizes, cohorting students, ventilation upgrades, testing and contact tracing.
  - b. Check the school website to see what kind of protocols they have put in place.
4. Explain to your child how they will be safe by following the school's health rules by wearing a clean mask, washing their hands regularly and staying apart.



## Masking

1. Give your child a chance to choose their own mask. They may have a favourite character or colour they prefer.
2. Pack a few clean masks for your kids and place them in a paper bag, or a sandwich container. If they get one dirty, they have a few spare ones to wear.
3. Practice putting on and taking off a mask with your kids so they feel comfortable going through this process at school. Watch this [video](#) from the Government of Canada as a refresher.
4. For younger kids, they can practice putting a small mask on their favourite doll or teddy so play is incorporated into the masking practice.
5. If your child cannot remove their mask without assistance, face shields can be used as an alternative.

## Illness

1. Fall is also flu season. With many respiratory viruses circulating, it's hard to know if your child has a cold or COVID-19 since many of the symptoms are the same.
2. If your child is not feeling well, keep them at home. Have your child tested for COVID-19.
3. Your child should stay at home until they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

## Additional Resources for Parents:

- Holland Bloorview's [back-to-school guidance](#) for children with disabilities
- [What to do if your child cannot wear a mask](#): tips from Holland Bloorview
- [Tip sheet](#) on in-person and virtual learning
- [Tips for Creating a Learning Schedule at Home](#)
- City of Toronto's [COVID-19 school information for parents and caregivers](#)
- [Back-to-school tip sheet](#) developed by Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO)

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We encourage you to visit our [website](#) to access all of our COVID-19 or Coronavirus specific family tip sheets.

If you are looking for other family resources that have to do with childhood disability, please visit [www.hollandbloorview.ca/resourcecentre](http://www.hollandbloorview.ca/resourcecentre).

Created by Infection Prevention Control and Communications at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital on September 20, 2021. If you have a question or a resource to share, please feel free to reach out to us at [resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca](mailto:resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca)