

NEWSLETTER

Belgian Paediatric COVID-19 Task Force

28/11/2020

Disclaimer:

The Belgian Paediatric COVID-19 Task Force (PTF) critically reviews the most recent scientific literature.

Advices and guidelines reflect the state of the art at a particular time.

They can be updated based on new developments. Implementation is at your own responsibility.

- **Even if the number of children that are severely sick, is still small, the Task Force has provided an update on the treatment protocol for children with COVID-19 or MIS-C (also called PIMS-TS).** You can find it on the Sciensano website in [FR](#) and in [NL](#).
- **Members of the Task Force contributed to a study that checked the seroprevalence in two schools in Limburg during the first wave.**
The [interim report](#) adds to the body of evidence that children can be infected if they are put in conditions with a high probability of infection (when the circulation in the community is high like in this study). We do want to stress that **several recent meta-analyses of contact tracing studies come all to the same conclusions, i.e. that children are less susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 than adults and are not the motor of the pandemic.** So, also taking into account psychosocial wellbeing and in order to avoid child abuse (which was very high in the first wave), the PTF still recommends that all children must go to school as much as possible.
- **What is the Task Force's position on masks between 6 and 12 years?**
The majority of paediatric COVID-19 studies still concludes that children, and especially those under 12, are not the motor of the epidemic. In accordance with the RAG advice ([NL](#) and [FR](#)), and for non-verbal communication purposes, the Paediatric COVID-19 Task Force **does not recommend masks for children in primary schools.** However, in accordance with the RAG recommendation, teachers and all adults should wear a mask inside primary schools when there is intense virus circulation in society, even if they can guarantee 1,5-meter distance, to prevent both droplet and aerosol transmission. We again want to stress the importance of **proper ventilation of classrooms** and other rooms in both primary and secondary schools. Opening opposite windows at the same time, to create an airflow through the class, works best. If there are no opposite windows that can be opened, opening windows in one wall and the door in the opposite wall, also works, as long as the hallway is somehow connected to an open window/door in the opposite side of the school so air can flow through the classrooms.



- **I don't follow anymore. When to test children and when is quarantine needed?**

We understand 😊.

More tests are available again and testing of 'high risk' contacts (on day 7) is possible again (to stop the quarantine; if no test: the quarantine is 10 days) from Nov 23th onwards. Children <6 who have a positive household contact **still don't need to be tested, but – since they are not tested – they remain in quarantine with their family, until 10 days after the last high risk contact** (i.e. 17 days after onset of symptoms - or positive test, if asymptomatic - of the household contact, unless the child is isolated from the infected parent/sibling). If there is a cluster in a collectivity, testing can however be indicated. More info can be found in [NL](#) and in [FR](#). The [CLB algorithms](#) have been adapted again to the new quarantine period! There is also an adapted [ONE and PSE procedure](#).

Daycare centres and kindergartens still DO NOT HAVE TO BE CLOSED unless the caregiver/teacher is positive or 2 children in the same bubble are positive. **ALL contacts (children/teacher) of a positive child/teacher in primary schools remain 'low risk'** and do not have to be tested. In secondary schools the same rules as for adults apply, which can be found here ([NL](#) and [FR](#)).

- **Corona classes**

Recently 6 [educational packs about Corona](#) were released for more than a million Flemish students, from toddlers to 18-years-olds. Its content is in-line with the October 1st Belgian RAG recommendation that Belgian people should be informed about the importance of transmission through aerosols. It explains the crucial moments that are most risky to transmit SARS-Cov-2 (i.e. when adults and older children talk to each other without wearing a mask), but also offers different options for class discussions about the effects of this crisis on (young) people's lives. Koen Vanden Driessche of the PTF supervised the scientific content.

- **Is regular paediatric care, including vaccinations, still recommended?**

The Task Force recommends to continue all regular care (including vaccination) for children – taking into account local hospital procedures – as much as possible, in order to avoid that children with chronic conditions lack important care.

- **Info and FAQ's on COVID-19 and children.**

You can find all procedures in [Dutch](#) and in [French](#).
All FAQ's can still be found here: [Dutch](#) and [French](#).

New questions are still welcome on covidpediatrie@gmail.com



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