



February 16, 2021

This is an update to our response to return to school questions from our patients after the most recent [CDC guidelines release](#).

A few words of response/recommendation from us:

- We recognize that elementary school transmission of disease and risk of severity of disease is low. It is reasonable for elementary schools to open with appropriate social guidelines in place (mask wearing for students and teachers over nose and mouth, social distancing, open air circulation whenever possible and reporting/contact tracing protocols for in-school Covid-19 cases).
- Ideally, these recommendations would be paired with an influx of funding to public schools so they can do their best at keeping kids safe. This is not currently the case. If you are in a position to donate to your local school district, please consider doing so.
- We support our teachers. We encourage all teachers to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Their group (1b) is up for vaccination. Please support your teachers by publicizing vaccination clinics in the Tucson area.
- Middle school and high schoolers are at comparatively increased risk for transmission of Covid-19. Current CDC guidelines recommend returning to in-person learning at this time only if school transmission rates continue to be low and if strict masking and social distancing precautions are practiced in school.
- If your child's middle or high school is opening, please be part of the solution. **You can do your part in getting kids successfully back to school.** By wearing a mask, social distancing, avoiding indoor activities and travel, and quarantining when symptomatic, you can decrease the numbers in your own community. If you want your kids to return to school, consider school being their only activity. The more exposure your kids have (movies, malls, sporting activities, sleepovers), the more risk you spread in our communities.
- **In-person schooling is not without risk.** Though the risk may be small for your children as kids continue to demonstrate a low rate of serious illness and death from Covid-19, it is not zero. If you have immunocompromised and unvaccinated people in your family, consider staying online for the remainder of the year.
- Please **vaccinate** when you are called to do so.
- **Masks are an integral part of protection for our community.** Please mandate masks for your children while at school and if they are in any community setting.
- Continue to model positivity and factual spread of information. As vaccination rates increase, paired with continued smart lifestyle choices for infection control, Covid has a real chance to decline. The variants we are seeing are the wild cards here. It is not exaggeration to say that we are in a race with the virus to get our world vaccinated before the spread of potentially more virulent strains.

As always, the staff at Tanque Verde Pediatrics is here for you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the return to school for your children, please call us. We'd be happy to consult on this issue with you. Thank you for keeping Tucson safe and healthy!

The Doctors and Staff of TVP