



Coronavirus update November 17, 2020

### **What is the current Covid climate in Pima County?**

Numbers are up. This is real and looks like the most significant numbers we have seen since the pandemic started. For up to date numbers for Pima County, please see [azdhs.gov](https://www.azdhs.gov).

### **What are we seeing at the office?**

We are seeing an increased number of visits (**by about 80%**) related to exposure to Covid-19. Many of these tests are negative, but a few have been positive. These exposures tend to be when people are in larger groups: weddings, schools, work environments, larger events. Keeping with studied acuity of children with Covid-19, we have had no hospitalized or critically ill children in this most recent outbreak.

### **Have our recommendations regarding school attendance changed?**

Not at this time. Our [recommendations for school attendance](#) remain the same for now (see link). If numbers continue to rise, we will support districts in changing back to online mode for education in the interest of public safety.

### **What do I do if my child is exposed to someone who later tests positive for Covid-19?**

If you are with someone who within 72 hrs has tested positive for Covid-19, you need to quarantine for 14 days. **Please close the loop.** Do not leave home for work, school or events. Optimal timing for testing after exposure is 4-5 days if you remain asymptomatic. If the exposed person gets symptoms (fever, sore throat, cough, diarrhea, headache, muscle aches or loss of taste/smell), then get tested as soon as possible (not urgently, but within a day or so).

### **What does a negative test mean?**

It all depends on the timing. At TVP, we use PCR tests (both rapid and regular). If you test negative but have a significant exposure, then KEEP IN QUARANTINE for the full 14 days from that exposure. The PCR tests are very accurate but you can contract the virus up to 14 days after the exposure. The

tests tell you your status at that moment, but ongoing exposures or the primary exposure should keep you from sending your child back to school before the 14 day mark.

### **What kinds of tests does TVP have?**

TVP has both rapid and regular PCR tests.

The rapid tests are in short supply, so they are used only in particularly instances. Your doctor **MUST** triage these tests until we are able to get more. They are anterior nasal swabs which make them easier on the patient. They have just slightly less sensitivity than the regular tests.

The posterior nasopharyngeal swab (commonly known as the brain biopsy - but it doesn't actually touch the brain!) takes about 1-2 days for results (at this time), but is a little more accurate. We tend to have these tests in greater supply and as a negative test does not mean your child can go back to school (see above), there is no rush to get the results. Please be patient and allow your doctor to triage resources.

### **What is considered an exposure?**

Close contact with COVID-19 occurs when you are within six feet of someone who is showing symptoms of COVID-19, for at least 15 minutes within a 24 hour span or with an infected person who shows no symptoms but later (within 3 days) tests positive for the coronavirus. This is considered exposure **regardless of whether one or both parties were wearing a mask.**

### **Does being outdoors matter?**

Being outdoors lessens the risk slightly but **MASKS SHOULD STILL BE WORN** and social distancing should still be in place. Outdoor activity does not negate the need for mask wearing.

### **Why should I get my child tested at TVP?**

Not only do we test at our office, but we examine your child to make sure that they are well and to check for other issues (other viral diseases, ear infections, etc). We can assess your child's exposure and give you accurate advice regarding reentry into school/work. We can also provide a note for return to school/work and advice on how long to quarantine (if necessary).

### **What is the process for getting my child tested? Do I need an appointment?**

Yes. An appointment is required for testing. We recommend a telemedicine visit early in the day for your doctor (or covering doctor) to assess the need for testing and evaluation. Call 520-722-2585 to make that appointment.

If your child has allergies, other issues or what is deemed a “non-Covid” illness, many times a telemedicine visit is all that is needed and a note can be written for school/work reentry.

If your child needs testing/evaluation, then we make an in-person appointment on the day that testing is most appropriate (depending on symptoms and exposure) and we will see you in the parking lot for that evaluation.

### **Do I pay two copays for these visits?**

No. These are treated as one visit. Copays and insurance deductibles apply.

### **Where can I go for testing if testing is needed on a weekend or late evening?**

As mentioned above, the timing of testing is rarely urgent, but if you feel like you or your child needs to be tested at a time that isn't available at TVP, you can find resources [here](#).

### **Can TVP test a parent or a child who is not a current patient?**

We do not have the resources to test parents at this time. See above for testing locations.

We are only testing active patients of our clinic as well. But good news! We are always accepting new patients. Call to register at 520-722-2585.

### **Is it still safe for my child to get well visits at the office? How is TVP keeping the office a safe place for all kids and their families?**

Yes! It is a safe place to be! We are proud to say that no member of our staff, including doctors, have contracted a Covid infection since the end of March. We realize that some of this is just luck (and that we have a great patient population and staff that strictly follow the recommendations). But we are committed to keeping our staff and patients healthy by putting in place precautions and procedures that protect them and you for your visit including:

- Well visits and non-infectious visits in the office in the morning and early afternoon
- Infectious visits seen in the parking lot in the later afternoons
- Telemedicine visits done when possible to decrease traffic in the office
- Covid specific cleaning protocols in all rooms after EVERY visit
- Screening of employees and patients/families every day and every visit
- Appropriate PPE for our staff and STRICT mask wearing for all staff and patients/families in our clinic

## **How can we best handle holiday plans?**

We support the recommendations by infectious disease experts and epidemiologists to help mitigate the spread of Covid-19 this holiday season by:

- Limiting groups to <10 people
- Keep all activities OUTDOORS WITH MASKS ON unless eating
- Separate families, separate tables - no pot lucks
- Car traffic only - try to keep away from flights where there are large groups
- Avoid restaurants, group fitness classes, movies, indoor activities

## **Any update on vaccines?**

There are currently 2 vaccines with great initial effectiveness data that should be starting roll out to health care workers and at-risk populations within the next 1-2 months. These data were independent studies that appear to be scientifically sound.

There are a few studies underway to examine the vaccine in the 12-17 age group, but have not been completed to date.

There will be further delay for a vaccine for children <12 years old.

When there is a vaccine for children, that has been independently studied and is scientifically proven to be safe and reliable, we will make every effort to get that vaccine to our patients. As that time gets closer, we will update you all.

## **What can I do to help?**

We get this question all the time for our wonderful families! We appreciate your willingness to follow our triage policies, wear your mask and keep the number of people in each room to a minimum.

We love that you are wearing your mask and socially distancing in your every day lives!

We encourage you to make telemedicine visits for Covid triage so we can see all of our patients in a controlled manner.

We are grateful for your connections to PPE and labs so that we can maintain adequate testing supplies and PPE in our office.

And we appreciate the reviews and social media compliments so that the word stays out that Tanque Verde Pediatrics is loved by their families - and believe us, the feeling is mutual!!