



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Oxiris Barbot, MD  
Commissioner

May 12, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) is currently investigating cases of Pediatric Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome, or PMIS, a new health condition appearing in children in New York City and elsewhere. The NYC Health Department is also investigating the possible association between PMIS and COVID-19 in children. Some doctors think the condition is related to having COVID-19, but the connection is still not clear.

PMIS is a rare condition that is not contagious. However, because it is life-threatening, it is important to know the signs. Most children have a persistent, high fever lasting several days, along with other symptoms, including:

- Irritability or sluggishness
- Abdominal pain without another explanation
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis, or red or pink eyes
- Enlarged lymph node (“gland”) on one side of the neck
- Red, cracked lips or red tongue that looks like a strawberry
- Swollen hands and feet, which might also be red

You should call your doctor if your child becomes ill and has had continued fever. Your doctor will ask about your child’s symptoms and use that information to recommend next steps. If your child is severely ill, you should go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 immediately.

Although it is not yet known whether it is associated with COVID-19, it is important parents and children take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Parents should help their children understand the importance of the following measures and ensure their children follow them:

- As per NYS Executive Order No. 202.17, **all people over the age of two who can medically tolerate a face covering must wear one when they are outside their home** if they cannot maintain physical distance from others.
- Physical distancing and good hygiene remain critical, even while wearing a face covering.
- When outside of home, adults and children, **must maintain at least 6 feet of distance** between themselves and others whenever possible.
- Parents should remind children of the importance of good hand hygiene and should help ensure that children frequently wash their hands.



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Oxiris Barbot, MD  
*Commissioner*

The health and safety of our communities remains our top priority, and we will continue to follow all guidance and take all appropriate measures to help keep our students, families, and staff members safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Oxiris Barbot, MD".

Oxiris Barbot, MD  
Commissioner  
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

**The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.**

5.12.2020