

In celebration of Father's Day on June 21st 2020, the Lurie Children's Family & Child Health Innovations Program (FCHIP) wants to help guide fathers during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The central tenet of the Family & Child Health Innovations Program (FCHIP) is "Children Thrive when Families Thrive." Established in 2020, FCHIP is housed at Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, in the Stanley Manne Research Institute and the Mary Ann & J. Milburn Smith Child Health Research, Outreach, and Advocacy (SCHROA) Center. FCHIP is directed by founder Craig F. Garfield, MD, MAPP.

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 Ann & Robert H. Lurie
Children's Hospital of Chicago

Stanley Manne
Children's Research Institute™
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Family & Child Health Innovations Program
2020 Father's Day Report:

Fathering During a Pandemic

Fathering During COVID-19

Due to COVID-19 changes, fathers may be more available to help as they are working from home and have a greater opportunity to be involved in their children's lives.



"The pandemic has reshaped the way fathers are involved with their families and children. Whether it is play, reading a book or getting down on the floor and spending time with their kids, this is an unprecedented opportunity for fathers to be really involved." - Dr. Craig Garfield, Director, FCHIP

Men are sharing more equally in domestic work since the pandemic, with 42% of fathers doing more housework and 45% spending more time taking care of young children compared to before the pandemic ([OSF working paper](#), 2020). Even in countries where fathers tend to be involved less at home, such as Japan, many fathers are stepping up their game.

Schools, camps, and child-care centers have closed temporarily, changing how



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families work; however, it is still important to maintain relationships and manage stress for parents ([Lancet, 2020](#)). There are plenty of [resources for parenting](#), including from the [World Health Organization](#) and [UNICEF](#) that fathers can turn to in order to help strengthen families and protect their children.

One simple way to keep you and your family healthy is to make sure everyone is up to date on their immunizations and [doctor check-ups](#). Doctors offices are prepared to keep parents and children safe and can help you manage your family during these stressful times. Remember, dads also should make sure they are in good health and up to date on vaccines such as pertussis (whooping cough) and influenza (the flu), two diseases that can harm people and even kill infants.

Another classic way fathers are involved with their children is through play. A special Father's Day report from [Lurie Children's Voices of Child Health in Chicago](#) this year found that dads are more likely to use their local park compared to moms. This is important because not only is outdoor recreation a way for children to exercise and learn more about their world, but [fathers' play](#) is often different from that of mothers', providing a unique dimension to child development.

The pandemic has reshaped the way fathers are involved with their families and children, according to Dr. Craig Garfield, Professor of Pediatrics, Northwestern University and Director, Lurie Children's Family & Child Health Innovations Program. Whether it is play, reading a book or getting down on the floor and spending time with their kids, this is an unprecedented opportunity for fathers to be really involved.

Have a New Baby? Here's how to Protect Your Growing Family

There are steps you can take to help your partner during pregnancy and delivery, and to keep yourself and family safe when taking your baby home.

The ongoing health crisis has changed health care visits during pregnancy and after delivery of your baby. The mother of your baby may have fewer visits or have telehealth visits over the phone. Delivery plans for your child are unlikely to change, but talk with your doctor about any questions, including rules about visitors to the hospital ([ACOG, 2020](#).) The best thing to do is contact your doctor with any questions, especially if you or the mother of your baby are high risk, and do not rely on internet advice ([New York Times, 2020](#)).

To read more from other parents who have navigated delivery during COVID-19, you can reference recent articles from [New York Times](#) and [Quartz](#).

One of the most important jobs fathers have is to help their partner breastfeed their new baby. Both the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recommend continued breastfeeding, which protects babies from illness. Parents with symptoms of COVID-19 should wash their hands



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before spending time with their baby and remember to wear a face mask before feedings with a bottle or breast. Fathers can also feed expressed breast milk or formula to babies if the mother is ill -- just be certain to wash your hands prior to feeding.

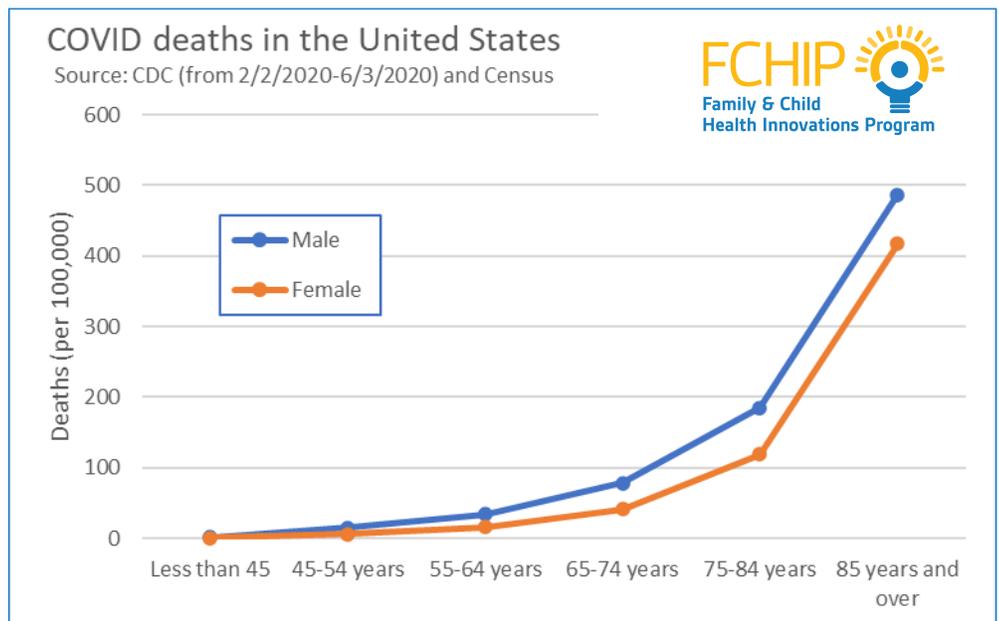


1. Practice social distancing.
2. Wash your hands often.
3. Cover your coughs and sneezes.
4. Clean, disinfect, and launder safely.”

Images and tips from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020

June is Men’s Health Month: Know Your COVID-19 Risks

As a male, you may be just as likely to contract COVID-19 as a female, but you have a higher likelihood of getting really sick. What do we know and what can you do to protect yourself?



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Census Bureau, 2020

More men than women are having serious cases of COVID-19 and being hospitalized, and this risk is higher as you age (JAMA, 2020; Frontiers in Public



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Health, 2020). Certain health conditions like hypertension, obesity and diabetes also increase your risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. Men are at higher risk than women at nearly all ages, especially at younger ages ([Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020](#); [Frontiers in Public Health, 2020](#)). Being part of an ethnic minority group increases your risk as well, for reasons ranging from a higher likelihood of having a chronic condition, to health system reasons such as less access to health care ([JAMA, 2020](#)).

Scientists are still exploring why men are more impacted by COVID-19 compared to women. The answer may lie in biology (like genetics, immune systems, or hormones), higher rates of chronic conditions and behaviors such as smoking, or exposure to pollution due to working outdoors and other high-risk jobs that are now considered “essential.” Men are also less likely to take steps to protect themselves or see a doctor if they have symptoms. ([Healthline, May 12, 2020](#)).

Further, the health of men who are becoming fathers is important for overall family reproductive and general health. For example, new research is examining whether the COVID-19 virus can be found in semen, in which case the virus could become a sexually-transmitted infection. While some studies show no virus in semen ([Fertility and sterility, 2020](#); [Biology of Reproduction, 2020](#)), others did find virus in semen samples ([JAMA Network Open, 2020](#)). Researchers and doctors recommend more studies to see whether COVID-19 can be transmitted sexually and uncover any other impacts on male reproductive health or their offspring.

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