COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare is doing all we can to respond to COVID-19 and taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety of our patients and employees. Below you will find the latest information on our efforts, but we also encourage you to visit the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the latest updates.

We will continue to update this page as new information is made available.

**COVID-19 Vaccination Information**

**Are Gillette patients currently eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Minnesota?**

Yes.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) recently announced that people age 16 and over with rare conditions or disabilities that put them at higher risk, people age 16 and over with specific underlying medical conditions and people age 16 and over with TWO or more underlying medical conditions are now eligible to get the vaccine in Minnesota. Additional information about who is eligible for the vaccine can be found here: mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/whos-getting-vaccinated/vaccinated.jsp

**Is Gillette providing vaccinations for patients and their primary caregivers?**

In response to these expanded eligibility guidelines, Gillette will begin offering the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine to existing Gillette patients over the age of 16 and their primary caregivers along with the primary caregivers of existing Gillette patients under the age of 16 who have a complex medical condition or disability (see separate section below on unpaid caregivers).

For now, there are a limited number of vaccination appointments available. We will be contacting patients and the caregivers of patients who are eligible directly, please do not call to request a vaccination appointment if you have not been contacted.

We are working to offer as many vaccines as possible, but supply is very limited and is dependent on what we receive from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

We appreciate your patience as we work to schedule appointments. As vaccine supply increases and doses become more widely available, opportunities to be vaccinated will expand.

We strongly encourage our patients and caregivers who are eligible for a vaccine not to wait to be contacted about getting a vaccine at Gillette and to schedule an appointment at other vaccination sites as soon as possible if there are appointments available to you.
If you are eligible and over 18, you can sign up to receive the vaccine through the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector.

People who are unable to sign up online or who require translation assistance should call 833-431-2053 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to sign up over the phone.

If you have specific questions about your eligibility for the vaccine, please contact your provider.

To find vaccine locations visit: [mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp](http://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp)

You can also contact your county or local public health officials to inquire about vaccine appointments and availability.

Additional Resources:

Assistance is also available through COVID-19 Community Coordinators. Coordinators contract with the State to serve communities hit hardest by COVID-19, including communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities, and Minnesotans with disabilities: [health.state.mn.us/ccc](http://health.state.mn.us/ccc)

Disability Hub MN also provides COVID-19 resources: [disabilityhubmn.org/top-topics/other/covid-19/resources/](http://disabilityhubmn.org/top-topics/other/covid-19/resources/)

For additional information on how the vaccinations are being distributed in Minnesota, please visit the following resources:

- [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/getvax.pdf](http://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/getvax.pdf)
- [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaxprocess.pdf](http://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaxprocess.pdf)

**Are Unpaid primary caregivers of children or adults who have a complex medical condition or disability eligible to receive the vaccination for COVID-19 in Minnesota?**

Yes.

Health care workers are those both who are paid and those who are unpaid. This staff includes Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) and Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), including those working on waivers and those working in home and community-based services. Eligible unpaid caregivers include primary caregivers who work in similar capacities as PCA’s, DSP’s and nurses for persons with complex medical needs and tactile interpreters for individuals who are deaf-blind.

These are all presumed to be included in the definition of “health care professionals”, given the broad array of personal support they provide in close-proximity with many different people who have complex needs, and are eligible to receive the vaccine for COVID-19.

More about vaccination for primary caregivers:

[health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/plan](http://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/plan)
How do I sign up for a vaccine if I am a caregiver?

You should sign up with the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector.

The first question in the “Demographic Details” section includes primary caregiver as a role, so you should select “yes” to that question. People who are unable to sign up online or who require translation assistance should call 833-431-2053 between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Friday, to sign up over the phone. You can also call this number if you already signed up and need to update your information for the Vaccine Connector.

How do I show that I am a primary caregiver for a person with complex medical needs?

There may be many ways to show you are providing direct care. For example, if you are providing care through Community Directed Community Support (CDCS), you could provide paperwork showing inclusion in that plan. The fiscal agent for administering the plan could provide a letter for people employed or caregiving under this system. You could provide a letter from a physician or other party. These are some examples but are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

If you need a letter verifying that you are an unpaid caregiver for a person with complex medical needs please contact their provider.

My child has a complex medical condition and is at a higher risk for developing complications from contracting COVID-19 – will they get prioritization over other kids?

The current FDA guidelines for the COVID-19 vaccine only authorize use of the vaccine for people over the age of 16 (Pfizer), or 18 (Moderna and Johnson & Johnson). There are currently clinical trials taking place for all three of the FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccines. Following the results of these trials, it is expected that more children will be able to be vaccinated safely. As this situation changes, we will continue to provide the most up to date information for our patients and their families.

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?

COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety standards as other routine vaccines. Companies making the vaccines are required to share information with government agencies such as the FDA and CDC that shows how the vaccine studies were designed, what their process was, how they got their data and what the results were. More information about the vaccine safety protocols can be found on the CDC’s COVID-19 page.

Help Gillette Maintain a Safe Environment
Gillette is resuming care, including procedures and surgeries, as determined safe by you and your provider. Many of you are in the process of rescheduling an appointment at one of our facilities and may still have some questions and concerns. We understand and want you to know that your safety is the top priority at Gillette. Please review the information below about how Gillette will continue to care for patients and families in a safe environment. Some of our clinics hours and locations are still adjusted so check the clinic page for the latest information.

- **Health and Wellness Screening**
  All of Gillette’s facilities require a wellness screening to check for signs of illness. Before entering our facilities, patients, visitors, employees and medical staff get their temperature checked and are asked questions about their symptoms, including cough, fever higher than 100° Fahrenheit, shortness of breath and other signs. Anyone showing symptoms of illness will not be allowed into our facilities.

- **Visitor Guidelines**
  If you are coming to visit a patient in the hospital or for same-day surgery, visitors are limited to two immediate family members or caregivers aged 18 and older per patient. Please do not bring siblings or other children under 18 years old.

  If you are visiting for a clinic appointment or other appointment such as a visit to Rehabilitation Therapies, Child and Family Services, or receiving Orthotics, Prosthetics and Seating services, please limit visitors to two for each patient. We prefer visitors to be parents or caregivers older than age 18.

- **Universal Masking**
  Just as providers and others staff members will be wearing masks and gloves (personal protective equipment), every patient who is able to, and every parent or caregiver must also wear a mask while visiting our facilities. This includes when patient and visitors are in non-clinical areas. You are encouraged to bring in your own homemade cloth face covering, but if you don’t have one, you can pick one up at our screening desk at our St. Paul campus. Any visitors who refuse to wear a mask will not be permitted on the facility.

- **Physical Distancing**
We ask that everyone practice social distancing, which means staying six feet away from other patients and visitors. When you arrive for your visit, you may notice signs, including special floor decals, to help make sure everyone stands six feet apart. You may also notice that seating has been rearranged in our waiting areas to follow social distancing guidelines.

- **Cleaning and Sanitizing**
  
  While maintaining a clean and safe space has always been a priority, *we have enhanced our cleaning measures*. All public areas and clinic rooms are being frequently sanitized, and all counters are continuously being disinfected. We encourage visitors to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use the hand sanitizer provided throughout our facilities.

### In-Person Appointments

As more families return to our facilities for in-person appointments, we have taken a number of important steps to make our facilities and your appointment as safe as possible. These measures include rearranging seating in our waiting areas in order to follow social distancing guidelines, and frequently sanitizing surfaces, rooms and other high traffic areas. Please review the policies that have changed since your last visit:

- **Visitors**
  
  Visitors are limited to [two immediate family members or caregivers](#) on any Gillette campus. We recommend you not bring siblings or other children under 18 years old to the medical center if they do not have an appointment.

- **Screening**
  
  *[Every person who enters a Gillette facility must go through a screening station]*. If there isn’t one at the entrance you use, find the closest station or ask an employee for help locating one. This is where you will have your
temperature taken with a no-touch thermometer, answer questions about any symptoms you may have, and receive a mask to wear during your visit. You MUST be screened before you go to any clinical areas.

Universal Masking

**Every family member must wear a mask while visiting our facilities.** This includes when patient and visitors are in non-clinical areas. You are encouraged to bring in your own homemade cloth face covering, but if you don’t have one, you can pick one up at our screening desk. Any adult non-patient who refuses to wear a mask will be asked to leave the facility.

**Surgeries and Procedures**

Doctors at Gillette will decide whether to do a procedure based on the patient’s individual needs.

What to expect before a procedure

All patients coming in for surgery or other procedures will be tested for COVID-19 before their procedure. Our pre-operative nursing staff is proactively reaching out to families who have a surgical procedure scheduled and are offering help in getting COVID-19 testing within 24-48 hours of their scheduled procedure. If you have questions or are unable to get your scheduled test, please contact Telehealth Nursing at 651-229-3890.

How do COVID-19 testing results affect procedures?

Based on the test results, the care team will evaluate the procedure and put appropriate protections in place. Your scheduled procedure may take place as scheduled or be postponed, as recommended by your care team. Emergency surgeries will not be delayed for testing.

What are risks of having a procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Before any procedure, your provider will explain any additional risks associated with COVID-19 based on each patient’s testing result and health history.

**Virtual Care**
If you want to see your provider without coming in to a clinic, virtual appointments allow you to talk with your provider face-to-face from your home using a mobile device. Sometimes, these visits can also take place via telephone if you do not have access to a video-enabled device. We also offer virtual visits for physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. Please visit our virtual care page for more information. To schedule an appointment (virtual or in-person), please call 651-290-8707.

Urgent and Emergency Care

If you need care and are unsure of what to do or if you have an urgent medical question, please contact Telehealth Nursing at 651-229-3890 and we will assist you in finding the best option.

If you have an emergent medical need or experience a medical emergency, go to your nearest Emergency Room or call 911.

Hospital and St. Paul Clinic Parking Update

Gillette Children’s entrance on Level B of the West Parking ramp – at 200 University Ave. – has moved to 640 Jackson Street, Regions Hospital West Entrance. This is an effort to keep our patients and employees safe, and better serve our families. When a patient checks into Regions, they will be screened and a member of their staff will direct them to elevators that bring them to Gillette.

For other patients and families, you can access the hospital from the St. Paul Campus West Parking Ramp on level D at all times. This is due to COVID-19 and the need for patient and visitor screening. Level C is closed at all times.

Additionally, below are the entrances to Gillette Children’s and Regions Hospital that will remain open during regular visitor hours (8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.):

- 4th Floor Gillette Main Entrance / Level ‘D’ of the West Parking Ramp
- Regions Hospital West Entrance
- Regions Hospital South Entrance
Look for more information as we develop additional resources for our families.

**Other Frequently Asked Questions**

Please call Gillette Telehealth Nursing (651-229-3890) for questions regarding the specific health needs of your child. We encourage families to visit the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites for further questions.

My child may be exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, what should I do?

If you are experiencing a fever, or cough or shortness of breath, or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, please stay at home and contact your primary care provider.

Should I come to Gillette Children's to be tested for COVID-19?

Gillette does not administer COVID-19 tests at any of their facilities. For those patients who need to be tested, Gillette will recommend a location close to you to complete your testing. If you or your child are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, please contact your primary care provider, let them know that you have symptoms and they should be able to provide you with additional resources.

What can I do to protect my child if they have a complex medical condition or compromised immune system?

The [Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)](https://www.health.state.mn.us) is urging children who have complex medical conditions or who have compromised immune systems to practice social distancing—staying six-feet or more away from another individual—and to keep your child home if they are sick.

The State of Minnesota has also closed K-12 public schools through March 27 in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Children who have compromised immune systems should also avoid public gatherings or other situations with potential exposure, including travel.

You can also reach out to your Gillette Children's provider with specific questions.

What is “social distancing” and how can I practice it?

The MDH encourages you to limit interaction with others and avoid sustained close contact to others. Social distancing encourages you to keep 6 feet apart from other people as much as possible. Shopping for groceries and other items is not affected by these recommendations, although it is a good idea to limit close contact when doing...
so—and people who are sick should not be shopping or using transit. They should stay home until they recover.

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COVID-19 FAQ

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Previous Article
March 19, 2020

COVID-19 – Staying Safe Without Going Stir-Crazy

Many of us will be spending more time at home during the outbreak of COVID-19 (the disease caused by coronavirus), and for those with young children, you may have to get a bit creative to keep them entertained during this time. To try to help, we sat down with the Child and Family Services Team at Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare to get some tips on ways you can practice proper social distancing, stay home and safe without going completely stir-crazy in the coming weeks.

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COVID-19 FAQ
The COVID-19 outbreak poses new concerns, especially for children who have complex medical conditions. Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare complex care pediatrician, Art Beisang, MD answers some frequently asked questions (FAQ) from parents concerned about caring for a child who has special medical needs.

Make An Appointment
651-290-8707
Refer a Patient
651-325-2200

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