
Staying Safe- COVID 19 Information and Resources

There is a lot of information out there about COVID-19, how to be safe, and the risks we all face. It can be a challenge to sift through it all and find what you are looking for. The DSAGSL is committed to providing applicable information from verified and credible sources to the community, so each family can make the decisions that are best for them. With COVID-19 cases on the rise, DSAGSL encourages families to consider this information when making decisions about outings, in-person events and programs, and other activities that increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.

We are continuously working to ensure our staff, volunteers, and community members remain safe and healthy which is why DSAGSL staff members are working from home and in-person programs have been suspended. However, we are still here answering questions, welcoming new families, and providing virtual programs. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions by phone or email. We would also be delighted to set up a video visit appointment!

You can reach the office at 314-961-2504 and choose the extension of the staff member you'd like to reach. You can also email info@dsagsl.org and your message will be directed to the staff member who can best help you. As always, you can visit our website dsagsl.org and follow us on social media for all things DSAGSL related.

THANK YOU to everyone for hanging in there with us through this challenging time, and please know that we are always here, every step of the way.

Research

In a recent letter published in the UK, researchers found that individuals with Down syndrome have been five times more likely to be hospitalized when they have contracted COVID-19, and have an even higher rate of death when infected with the virus. <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/10/down-syndrome-tied-10-times-risk-covid-19-death>

Additionally, some of our country's most reputable national Ds organizations helped to fund a research report titled, "*An international survey on the impact of COVID-19 in individuals with Down syndrome.*" <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.11.03.20225359v1>

Like the one from the U.K., this study found that "Leading signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and risk factors for severe disease course are similar to the general population. However, individuals with DS present significantly higher rates of mortality, especially from age 40."

These reports suggest that the higher rates of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths in patients with Down syndrome compared to no reported disability are because abnormal immune responses, congenital heart disease, and lung abnormalities are more common in people who have Down syndrome.

Strategies

Massachusetts General Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital for Children have release *Recommendations for People with Down Syndrome to Safely Re-enter Into the Community*. This document is filled with information about who it is safe to visit, how to encourage wearing a mask, how to prepare a loved one with Down syndrome for a COVID-19 test, and more. Thank you to St. Louis Children's Hospital for sharing this document with us, so that we could share it with you <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rTAe4CVSGc8g63LMiTZftcZb-qHJbRdurgpvoRiyBg/edit>

The CDC has lots of information about how caregivers can keep individuals who are at a higher risk for complications from COVID-19 safe. For more information, visit their website https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fpeople-at-increased-risk.html

Our very own Ms. Andi has created helpful videos on our YouTube Channel about social distancing <https://youtu.be/CImLyEuU2qA>, the importance of wearing a mask <https://youtu.be/lbZ6LrXpNtk>, as well as how to choose the perfect mask for your loved one with Down syndrome https://youtu.be/EBsx_9pQnhE.

If you need more strategies for teaching or encouraging your loved one to wash their hands and wear a mask, we can help! Contact Andi@dsagsl.org.



Resources

You can visit <https://www.startherestl.org/covid-19-local.html> to find resources on everything from housing, utility, and food assistance, mental health resources, and a lot more.

You can also visit <https://stlresponse.org/>. This is a COVID-19 Resource Dashboard where organizations through the region can post information about resources they offer.

United Way 211 is resource hub for the Greater St. Louis area. A Resource Coordinator can connect you with the services you are looking for. You can dial 2-1-1 on your phone to be connected and speak with someone, you can text 1-800-427-4626 (available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm), or visit <https://www.211helps.org/> for chat options or to search the directory.

If you live in St. Louis County, you can visit stlcorona.com/resources/ for information on everything from internet and utility help, rent assistance, COVID-19 testing sites, education and e-learning resources, and more.

In Illinois, you can visit <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=123529> and click on the type of resources you are looking for such as food, shelter, or someone to talk to. You can also visit the Illinois Developmental Disabilities Services page here <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=32253>

