

Should you send your kid to summer camp? Expert offers advice

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(HealthDay)—Summer camps are an annual ritual for millions of

children, but one expert offers advice on how to determine whether it's safe to send your kids to one during the coronavirus pandemic.

First, your children need to understand the importance of regular hand-washing, according to Dr. Cynthia Roldan, medical director, from Carroll Hospital's pediatrics department, in Westminster, Md.

"Hand-washing is the most important way to prevent infection," she said in a LifeBridge Health news release. "If it becomes a part of the child's regular life at home, it's going to be easier to get them to do it at camp."

Second, consider whether your child or any member of your household has a [preexisting condition](#), such as diabetes or asthma, that could put them at higher risk of developing [severe illness](#) from COVID-19.

"Parents have to consider their own family's risk. It's not just the risk to the child," Roldan said.

Will your child wear a [face mask](#)?

"It may be too much to expect a [young child](#) to wear a face mask all of the time. The staff will do their best to encourage that, but it's difficult to do," Roldan said.

Be sure the camp ensures that children practice social distancing, which means maintaining a distance of at least six feet apart and limiting the size of gatherings. Local and state guidelines vary on the number of people who are allowed to gather together.

Check to see if the camp disinfects common areas or surfaces regularly to kill germs and limit the spread of infection.

"Kids are constantly touching everything. If something is infected with

COVID-19 and they then put their hands to their nose, face, mouth or eyes, that's how the infection spreads," Roldan said.

Outdoor play and activities offered at camps are crucial for children, but parents must research, ask questions and weigh the risks before they register their [children](#), she concluded.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [summer camps and the pandemic](#).

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