

COVID-19 in kids with DEEs

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COVID harms to neurology patients

- ▶ Most kids will have a mild illness
- ▶ This does not guarantee mild illness for children with DEE
- ▶ The harms go beyond the virus itself

Indirect COVID harms

- ▶ During lockdowns there was decreased access to resources
- ▶ Finding help is harder even 2 years later
- ▶ The virtual double-edged sword
- ▶ DEE kids can't live in a bubble
- ▶ Caregiver physical and mental health

What I've seen in pediatric neurology

- ▶ Long COVID in previously healthy kids
- ▶ New onset chronic headaches
- ▶ Increased seizures
- ▶ Febrile seizures in kids without epilepsy
- ▶ Possible association with severe nerve disease
- ▶ Severe course of a child with DEE

What others have seen in DEE

- ▶ Seizures worse during the illness
- ▶ Child with LGS develop severe lung infection
- ▶ Infantile spasms relapse while sick with COVID

What does the data say

- ▶ Canadian study reviewed 75 kids with severe COVID
- ▶ The most common associated condition was neurodevelopmental disability (13%)
 - ▶ Followed by obesity, then epilepsy
- ▶ CDC reviewed 2562 pediatric COVID admissions
 - ▶ 9.5-11% of children had pre-existing neurologic conditions
- ▶ Italian study of 1575 adults with epilepsy found patients with EE and on multiple seizure meds were twice as likely to require hospitalization
- ▶ CDC reviewed 121 pediatric COVID deaths
 - ▶ Neurologic/developmental condition was the 3rd most common comorbidity after lung disease and obesity

What can we say about COVID & the DEE community?

- ▶ The pandemic poses serious and unique challenges for the DEE community
- ▶ COVID affects how we care for kids, where we care for them, and what complications they may have
- ▶ The virus is mild for most kids but not all kids
- ▶ DEE kids at higher risk due to neurological and respiratory conditions

- ▶ There is a lot we do not know about COVID and DEE
- ▶ But we do know that the vaccine is safe and well tolerated in millions of kids, including many kids with DEE
- ▶ Talk with your pediatrician and your neurologist about the safety of the COVID vaccine