

# **Boston Children's Hospital launches cloud-based education on Amazon Alexa-enabled devices**

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Through a new skill created for Amazon Alexa-enabled devices, parents will now be able to ask Alexa a variety of questions around fever and other common symptoms. The 'KidsMD' Alexa skill was developed by the Innovation & Digital Health Accelerator (IDHA) team at Boston Children's Hospital and launched today.

"My child has a fever of 101. Should I be concerned?" Through a new skill created for Amazon Alexa-enabled devices, parents will now be able to ask Alexa a variety of questions around fever and other common symptoms. The "KidsMD" Alexa skill was developed by the Innovation & Digital Health Accelerator (IDHA) team at Boston Children's Hospital and launched today.

Devices enabled with Alexa, such as Amazon Echo, Echo Dot, Amazon Tap and Amazon Fire TV, can help parents decide whether symptoms like fever, cough, headache, rash, vomiting, sore throat, diarrhea, fatigue or shortness of breath warrant a call to the doctor—all by using the convenience of voice. The KidsMD Alexa skill can also offer weight- or age-specific dosing guidelines for over-the-counter drugs like acetaminophen, tapping cloud-based content created and curated by Boston Children's physicians.

"We eventually intend to enable Alexa to give broader kinds of health care information via KidsMD, but we're starting with symptoms that are

of common concern to parents," says Boston Children's Chief Innovation Officer John Brownstein, PhD, who leads the IDHA team.

When people purchase an Alexa-enabled device through Amazon.com or at select retail stores, it comes with Alexa and a variety of Alexa skills and domains such as playing music and asking [questions](#) about the weather. To access the KidsMD skill, users will first need to enable the skill within the Alexa app. To activate the skill, the user can then say phrases like, "Alexa, ask KidsMD about dosing," or "Ask KidsMD about [fever](#)," and then proceed with their question.

"The KidsMD skill makes it easier to access medical information from Boston Children's Hospital, a world-class medical institution. That access is important for all of our Alexa customers, and particularly [parents](#)," says Rob Pulciani, Amazon Alexa Director. "We're thrilled to be working with Boston Children's on such a unique and valuable skill. We now have over 500 Alexa skills, and we're looking forward to adding more important skills like this for our customers."

"Families will increasingly look to perform front-line health care triage with diagnostic mobile apps and devices and decision support applications," says Nitin Gujral, IDHA's software development manager. "Connected home devices like Amazon's Echo, Echo Dot, Fire TV and Amazon Tap will begin to be used for intuitive health care delivery."

The KidsMD skill for Alexa is intended to provide general guidance and is for informational and educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

"Our current focus is on providing educational information on common pediatric symptoms and guidance for at-home treatment," says Jared Hawkins, MMSc, PhD, director of informatics for IDHA. "However, in the future we envision Alexa-enabled devices being a central point for

the public to verbally interact with all of the educational content developed at Boston Children's Hospital."

"I am thrilled to see our team take the first leap in leveraging an engaging consumer device such as Amazon Echo in health care," says Michael Docktor, MD, clinical director of [innovation](#) at IDHA. "As [health care](#) becomes more focused on the user experience, we are excited about the opportunities that Alexa and other technologies can offer our patients."

Provided by Children's Hospital Boston

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