



## Is Your Child Too Sick for School?

Children who are ill or feel sick can create difficulties in group settings such as the classroom environment. An ill child often demands more attention from the teacher or caregiver and cannot fully participate in group or educational activities. Worse yet, the child with a communicable disease may spread the illness to others. This is especially true in the case of medically fragile children.

On the other hand, children who don't have a fever and only have a mild cough, runny nose or other cold symptoms can be sent to school without any harm to themselves or others.

- The main reason for keeping your child home are:
  - Too sick to be comfortable in school.
  - Might spread a contagious disease to other children/staff.
  
- As a rule of thumb a child should stay home if he has:
  - A fever (100.4F or greater)
  - Vomited
  - Diarrhea
  - A very frequent cough
  - Persistent pain (ear, stomach, etc.)
  - A widespread rash



## When should I keep my child home from school?

- **Cold Symptoms**  
Children with coughing, sneezing, chills, general body discomfort, fatigue, fever, and excessive discharge from the nose and/or eyes, should be kept home until fever is resolved for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
  
- **Fever** (Temperature greater than 100.4°F or above, by any method)  
Children excluded from school due to a fever may not return to school until they are fever free, without fever-reducing medication, for 24 hours.  
If a child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to school the following day, at a minimum. This includes school sponsored activities.
  
- **Influenza (Flu)**  
A child should stay home from school if the flu is suspected or confirmed. Symptoms may develop quickly and include body aches, high fever, chills, congestion, sore throat and, in some children, vomiting. Children who have had the flu may return to school fever free for 24 hours and the coughing/symptoms have improved so they can resume normal activities.

- **Strep Throat or other bacterial infection**

Any diagnosis of a bacterial infection should be treated with an antibiotic for at least 24 hours, and fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. Strep throat usually presents with a sudden complaint of sore throat and fever, often a stomachache and headache too.

- **Cough**

A persistent cough during the day can indicate a worsening of cold or allergy symptoms. It may be a sign of secondary infection (ie. sinusitis, pneumonia), which may require medical treatment, especially if the cough is accompanied with abnormal behavior, fever or difficulty breathing. In addition, if a cough induces vomiting, passing out or is productive of colored sputum, your child should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.

- **Abdominal Pain**

A child with abdominal pain that continues for more than 2 hours, or intermittent pain associated with fever or other symptoms should stay home from school.

- **Diarrhea and Vomiting**

These make children very uncomfortable. A single episode of watery diarrhea probably warrants not going to school. It could be embarrassing or uncomfortable for your child to have another episode while at school. If diarrhea and vomiting are frequent or are accompanied by a fever, rash or general weakness, consult your child's doctor and keep the child out of school for 24 hours with no vomiting, diarrhea or fever without the use of medication. Exception: A note is required from your healthcare provider if it is determined that the diarrhea or vomiting are not infections in nature.

- **Pink Eye or Conjunctivitis**

Can be caused by a virus, bacteria, or allergy. The first two are very contagious. Symptoms of conjunctivitis include eye redness, discharge from one or both eyes (yellow or green), matted eyelashes, burning or itching and light sensitivity. Consult your child's doctor to see if antibiotic drops are needed. The child must have symptoms resolved or be treated by an antibiotic eye drop for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

- **Skin Rash**

Presence of any skin rash (red, itching or associated with a fever) that might be due to an infection should be evaluated by a healthcare provider and treated before returning to school. For students with a diagnosed rash, please contact the school as certain exclusions and clearance conditions may be required.

**Skin Sores:**

A child with open/weeping sores on an exposed area or area that cannot be covered with waterproof dressing will need to remain home until the sore can be treated, is closing/healing or can be covered.

- **Head Lice**

Lice are tiny wingless insects, like ticks, that thrive on the warm scalps of children and cause itching. If discovered, lice should be treated immediately, with advice from your child's doctor. Children need to stay home from school until head lice are dead and until nits (eggs) are removed. A child returning from head lice will need to be cleared by the school nurse, principal or other qualified personnel. Caution your child against sharing combs, brushes, hats or other clothing.

- [Head Lice Guidelines](#)