

When To Keep Your Child Home

Your son says he isn't feeling well. He looks OK, but you are not sure if you should send him to school. Your daughter wakes up with a rash. Should she go to school? Deciding when to send your child to school can be a difficult decision. The following information is offered to hopefully make the decision easier for you. If you have any questions please contact your healthcare provider.

Children, because of the way they interact with their environment (touch more things, wash hands less), come into contact with viruses and bacteria that can cause illness.

The good news is that their immune systems usually respond rather quickly to fend off and overcome any infection. A rise in temperature, a rash, vomiting and diarrhea are all ways the body responds to an infection.

Young children, because of their less experienced immune systems, can become ill rather frequently. It is not unusual for children to have between 6-10 colds each year. Colds or upper respiratory infections are usually caused by a virus.

While no one feels good when they have a cold, viruses tend to hang on for as long as three weeks. It is difficult for success in school if a student were to miss that many days.

While you don't want your child to miss school, neither do you want to send a sick child to school and endanger him/her or other children as well.

KEEP YOUR CHILD HOME WHEN...

- Oral temp is above 100° F.
- Cold symptoms serious enough to interfere with your child's ability to learn.
- Cough causing difficulty breathing or moderate to severe chest pain.
- Diarrhea or vomiting.
- Undiagnosed rash or open sores with drainage.
- Headache severe enough to interfere with learning.
- Abdominal pain accompanied by elevated temperature, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Sore throat serious enough to interfere with swallowing or accompanied by fever or rash.
- Head lice infestation. Student excluded for live lice or nits. Nits must be removed to prevent reinfestation. Student may return to school once lice and eggs (nits) are removed.
- "Pinkeye"- If drainage present or discomfort interferes with learning. Should stay home for 24 hrs. after start of treatment.
- Any bacterial infection until student has been on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours.

USE THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES IN DECIDING WHEN A CHILD IS TOO ILL TO BE IN SCHOOL:

TEMPERATURE:

The oral temperature should be below 100° for 24 hours without the assistance of Tylenol or other fever reducing medication (parents are cautioned against giving aspirin to children and teenagers with fevers due to possible Reye's Syndrome). If your child has a temperature of 100° or greater, this indicates an infection of some nature. If your child develops a fever in school you will be contacted and asked to take your child home.

COLDS / COUGH:

A runny nose is the way many children respond to pollen, dust, or simply a change in seasons. Many runny noses are caused by allergies which are not contagious. If your child has a moderate or severe cough or symptoms that make him/her moderately uncomfortable, keep him/her at home to provide extra rest, and push fluids. Persistent coughing can disrupt learning for everyone. Seek medical advice if your child has severe difficulty breathing or is becoming dehydrated.

HEADACHES:

Children are encouraged to remain in school with headaches unless it interferes with learning. Keep a log of when headaches occur, and what relieves them. Over the counter pain medication is only given at school if a medication consent is signed by the parent and the parent provides the medication.

ABDOMINAL PAIN / NAUSEA:

Students are encouraged to remain in school unless pain is accompanied by fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. Abdominal pain, like headaches, can be experienced by children who are anxious or feel stress. It is of more help to the student if we can help him/her find the source of the anxiety and deal with that rather than stay home. If your child has no other symptoms and eats breakfast without any problems, he can be sent to school. Please make sure the school knows how to reach you or another responsible adult during the day in case diarrhea and/or vomiting occurs or pain increases and your child needs immediate attention.

EAR INFECTIONS:

These can be contagious and unless properly treated can cause permanent hearing damage. Seek medical attention if your child is moderately uncomfortable, pain has lasted more that 5 days, or drainage is present.

SORE THROAT:

Strep throat is a contagious condition caused by a bacterial infection. Usually it is accompanied by a fever. A child with strep throat needs to be kept home, medically evaluated and treated with antibiotics. A child with strep throat may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours as long as they are feeling well enough. Seek medical advice for any sore throat accompanied by fever, pus in back of throat, or rash.

RASH / SORES:

Our skin is a very sensitive organ and is often the first to indicate something is going on in our body. Children may develop rashes for all sorts of reasons. Do not send your child to school if a rash is accompanied by fever or is spreading. Seek medical advice if your child develops a rash with open sores or blisters, has severe itching, or is unrelieved by home treatments.

CHICKENPOX:

This viral disease is not life threatening but is uncomfortable and contagious. If your child has a fever, itching, and sprouts pink or red spots (with watery centers) on the back, chest, and/or face, the chances are good it is chickenpox. Keep your child home until all lesions are dry and crusted over.