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CHILD CARE AND ILLNESS: Should Your Child Stay Home?

It is often hard to decide whether your child is too ill to go to child care. In general, children should stay home if illness keeps them from enjoying the usual activities of child care. Children should also be kept at home if the illness requires more care than providers can give without affecting the health and safety of other children in their care.

The list below follows Ohio's child care rules from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

CHILD IS TOO ILL

Your child is too ill to be in child care if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- Seems very tired and needs bed rest (a common flu symptom)
- Vomits more than 1 time, or has vomiting plus other signs of illness
- Diarrhea (3 or more loose, watery, unformed stools in 24 hours - not caused by a change in diet or medicine), especially if it runs out of the diaper or underwear.
- Cough that interrupts his normal play or sleep.
- Shortness of breath or increased wheezing during normal activity
- Underarm temperature above 100°F especially if there are other signs of illness
- Pain from an earache, headache, sore throat or recent injury that makes it hard to play or sleep normally
- White or yellow eye discharge with pink or red skin inside the eyelid
- Rash with a fever or change in behavior
- Mouth sores along with drooling, unless the doctor decides that the child is not contagious.



Picture 1 Your child should not go to childcare if his underarm temperature is above 100°F.

FEVER

Your child should not go to child care if his underarm temperature is above 100°F. He may go back to school when it is below 100°F and he feels well enough to play normally.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE

A contagious disease is one that spreads by close contact with a person or object. Nearly all illnesses are contagious; however, not all illnesses are a danger to other children and staff in the child care. **Many illnesses can be spread 24 hours before the child shows signs of illness.** For this reason, keeping a child out of child care may do little to keep other children from getting sick. Germs are everywhere, especially in the child care setting. Proper hand-washing, as well as cleaning and disinfecting toys and surfaces are still the best ways to stop the spread of illness.

Some illnesses require children to stay away from child care:

- Lice and scabies – no child care until after the first treatment
- Impetigo – no child care for 24 hours after treatment starts
- Strep throat or other strep Infections – no child care for 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started and when fever is gone
- Tuberculosis*
- Chickenpox*
- Pertussis – Whooping cough*
- Hepatitis A*
- Measles, mumps or rubella*
- Shingles*
- Salmonella, shigella, E. coli, Campylobacter, Giardia*
- Neisseria Meningitis*

*These illnesses must be reported to the local Health Department. Your child's doctor will tell you when your child may return to child care.