

School and Illness: Should Your Child Stay Home?

When your child is sick, it's important to know when they should stay home from school. If they have a contagious (kuhn-**tay**-juhs) disease, keep them home. This will help them get better faster and keep their teachers and classmates from getting sick.

When Your Child Is Too Sick

Talk to your child's doctor or health care provider if you are unsure if they should stay home from school. As a general rule, your child should not go to school if they have:

- A fever over 100.4° Fahrenheit (F) or 38° Celsius (C) – Your child can return to school after they've been fever-free for 24 hours without antipyretics. Antipyretics are medicines that treat or prevent fever.
- Signs they are weak and tired. This is common with the flu.
- Diarrhea – Having loose poop (stool) more often than isn't caused by a change in diet.
- Throwing up (vomiting) – More than 2 times in a 24-hour period.
- Coughing that disrupts normal activity.
- Wheezing or get short of breath.
- Pain from earache, headache, sore throat, or recent injury.
- Yellow or green drainage from the eye(s).
- A new rash – Not all rashes mean your child must stay home from school. Check with their doctor or health care provider.

Contagious Disease

A contagious disease is one that can be spread by close contact with a person or object. Your child must stay home from school if they have a contagious disease. They may be contagious **before** showing any signs of illness.

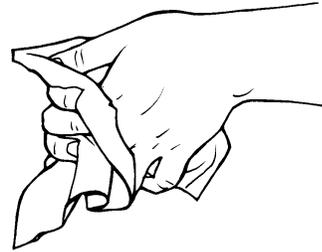
- Some contagious diseases include:
 - COVID-19
 - The flu
 - A cold
 - Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)
 - Strep throat
 - Measles
 - Chickenpox
 - Whooping cough
- Good hand washing will help prevent the spread of germs. Teach your child to wash their hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.
 - Wash hands with soap and warm water (see steps below). Wash for 20 seconds, or the time it takes to sing the ABCs or *Happy Birthday*.
 - They may also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. It must contain at least 60% alcohol. Rub on hands until dry.



1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.



2. Rinse hands well with clean, warm water.



3. Dry hands with a clean, dry towel or paper towel.



4. Use towel to turn off the water.

Contagious Disease Care

If your child is contagious, ask their doctor or health care provider when they can go back to school. Contact their school before returning. Diseases can be spread to other children through classmates, teachers, shared supplies, and more.

- Chickenpox – No school until all spots (lesions) are dried and crusted.
- Lice and scabies – No school until after the first treatment.

- Impetigo – Start treatment and cover visible lesions before returning to school.
- Strep throat or other strep infections – Can return if they do not have a fever **and** have been on antibiotics for at least 12 hours.

Report these contagious illnesses to the local Health Department and keep your child home:

- Tuberculosis
- Chickenpox
- Hepatitis A
- Shingles
- Meningococcal disease (*Neisseria meningitidis*)
- Measles, mumps, or rubella
- Whooping cough (pertussis)
- Food poisoning (*Salmonella*, *shigella*, *E. coli*, *Campylobacter*)

For any questions, contact your child’s doctor or health care provider.