

General Guidelines for Keeping your Child Home from School

Due to Illness

It is sometimes difficult to decide when and how long to keep a child home from school. The timing of the absence is often important in order to decrease the spread of disease to others, and to prevent your child from acquiring other illnesses while his/her resistance is lowered. The following guidelines represent the more common childhood illnesses and the usual recommendations.

1. Fever: If your child is sent home from school with a fever do not send him/her to school the following day. Your child should be fever free for 24 hours. A child's temperature is lowest in the morning so a low temperature on awakening is not a true indicator. If you have given your child Tylenol or Motrin at night, the medication could still be affecting your child's temperature. A child should be fever free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
2. Vomiting/diarrhea. A child should be free of vomiting/diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. A child who has been ill during the night may feel slightly better in the morning and even ask to go to school. However, the child will likely experience symptoms of illness later, will also be tired from loss of sleep and will still be contagious to other children.
3. Nasal discharge: A child with thick or constant nasal discharge should remain home. Very few younger children can effectively blow their noses and wash their hands afterwards. A child with the above symptoms will quickly spread the illness to other children.
4. Strep throat: A child diagnosed with strep throat/scarlet fever should remain home for the first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
5. A child remains contagious until he/she has been on antibiotics for 24 hours. To prevent the spread of strep throat and other illnesses: encourage children to wash hands frequently, especially after blowing their nose or coughing. Do not share drinks or food with their friends.
6. A child diagnosed with conjunctivitis may attend school after 24 hours of treatment. There should also not be any drainage from the eyes.

THE 24 HOUR TEST

A child should stay home for 24 hours to rest if the following symptoms are present the morning of school or the previous night: vomiting, diarrhea, fever, itchy or reddened eyes with drainage, an unusual rash, a poor night's sleep due to illness, cough, etc.

Your child must also have the energy needed to participate fully in all school activities.

Thank you,
Moiria Kuzila, R.N.
School Nurse