

ILLNESS POLICY WHEN TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AT HOME

Young children frequently become mildly ill. Infants, toddlers and preschoolers experience a yearly average of six respiratory infections (colds) and can develop one to two gastrointestinal infections (vomiting and/or diarrhea) each year.

Deciding when children can go to child care or school can be difficult. Parents and caregivers should discuss the child's symptoms and decide what to do.

Parents should contact the child care program or school when their child is sick and describe the symptoms. If a specific diagnosis, (such as strep throat or "pink eye") is made by a doctor (health care provider), let program staff know so other families can be alerted.

Sometimes it is necessary for a child to remain at home.

There are three reasons to keep (exclude) sick children out of child care or school:

1. The child is not able to participate in usual activities. Child may be very tired, irritable or cry a lot.
2. The child needs more individual care than program staff can provide.
3. The illness or symptoms are on the exclusion list.

Look at the symptoms and/or illness list below to help you decide if your child should be kept home from child care or school:

ILLNESS OR SYMPTOM	EXCLUSION IS NECESSARY
CHICKEN POX	Yes - until blisters have dried and crusted (Usually 6 days). If blisters occur after vaccination, refer to Colorado Health Department guidelines
CONJUNCTIVITIS (pink eye) (pink color of eye <i>and</i> thick yellow/green discharge)	Yes - until 24 hours after treatment (if indicated) If your health provider decides not to treat your child, a note is needed authorizing return to group care
COUGHING (severe, uncontrolled coughing or wheezing, rapid or difficulty in breathing)	Yes - medical attention is necessary. Note: <i>Children with asthma may be cared for with a written health care plan and authorization for medication/treatment</i>
COXSACKIE VIRUS (Hand, foot and mouth disease)	No - may attend if able to participate in usual activities, unless the child has mouth sores and is drooling
CROUP (see COUGHING)	Seek medical advice Note: <i>May not need to be excluded unless child is not well enough to participate in usual activities</i>
DIARRHEA (frequent, loose or watery stools compared to child's normal pattern; not caused by diet or medication)	Yes – if child looks or acts ill; diarrhea with fever and behavior change; diarrhea with vomiting; diarrhea that is not contained in the toilet, (infants/children in diapers should be excluded)
EARACHE	No – unless unable to participate in usual activities or fever with behavior changes (see FEVER)
FEVER <u>with</u> behavior changes or illness (an elevation of body temperature above normal) Note: <i>An unexplained temperature of 100°F or above is significant in infants 4 months of age or younger and requires immediate medical attention</i>	Yes - when fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other symptoms of illness, such as rash, sore throat, vomiting, etc. Note: <i>Fever alone is not a reason to exclude from care</i>

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ILLNESS OR SYMPTOM	EXCLUSION IS NECESSARY
FIFTH'S DISEASE	No - child is no longer contagious once rash illness appears
HEADLICE OR SCABIES	May return after treatment starts
HEPATITIS A	Yes – until 1 week after onset of illness or jaundice and when able to participate in usual activities
HERPES	No – unless child has mouth sores and blisters <i>and</i> does not have control of drooling
IMPETIGO	Yes – until 24 hours after treatment starts
BODY RASH <u>with</u> fever	Yes - seek medical advice. Any rash that spreads quickly, has open, weeping wounds and/or is not healing should be evaluated Note: <i>Body rash without fever or behavior changes usually does not require exclusion from the program; seek medical advice</i>
RESPIRATORY OR COLD SYMPTOMS (stuffy nose with clear drainage, sneezing, mild cough)	No – may attend if able to participate in usual activities
RINGWORM	May return after treatment starts Keep area covered for the first 48 hrs of treatment
ROSEOLA	No – unless child cannot participate in usual activities and has fever with behavior changes.
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	Seek medical advice. Once a child has been infected, spread is rapid. Note: <i>A child does not always need to be excluded unless child is not able to participate in usual activities</i>
STREP THROAT	Yes - until 24 hours after treatment and the child is able to participate in usual activities
VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough).	Yes – until judged not infectious by the health care provider
VOMITING (2 or more episodes of vomiting in the past 24 hrs; vomiting with fever; recent head injury)	Yes – until vomiting resolves or a health care provider approves return to program.
YEAST INFECTIONS (thrush or candida diaper rash)	No Follow good hand washing and hygiene practices

Handout developed by The Children's Hospital School Health Program, Denver, CO (303)-281-2790, 1995, revised 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards*, Second Edition, Elk Grove Village, IL 2002
- American Academy of Pediatrics, *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools*, Elk Grove Village, IL 2005
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program, *Infectious Disease in Child Care Settings: Guidelines for Child Care Providers*, Denver, CO., December 2002
- Kendrick AS, Kaufman R., Messenger KP, Eds. *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs*. Washington, D.C. National Association for the Education of Young Children; 2002

SCHOOL EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

The decision to exclude students who have an infectious disease should be made in conjunction with the school, health care providers, parents and/or the school nurse consultant. Students should be allowed to return to school once the exclusion period is met or a health care provider clears the student. Generally, if any of the following conditions apply, exclusion from school should be considered:

- ✓ If the student does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in usual activities
- ✓ If the student requires more care than school personnel are able to provide
- ✓ If the student has a high fever, behavior changes, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, lack of energy, uncontrolled coughing or other signs suggesting a possibly severe illness
- ✓ If the student is ill with a potentially contagious illness and exclusion is recommended by a health care provider, state or local agency, or these guidelines**

ILLNESS OR SYMPTOM	EXCLUSION GUIDELINES
Chicken pox	Exclude until <u>all</u> blisters have erupted & crusted over
Common Cold	No exclusion necessary unless symptoms are severe
Cough (significant) (uncontrolled coughing; wheezing; rapid or difficult breathing)	Exclude , medical attention is necessary <i>Note: Students with <u>stable</u> asthma may be cared for with a written health care plan and authorization for treatment</i>
Diarrhea <u>with</u> fever, vomiting, abdominal pain	Exclusion is recommended <u>if</u> the student has symptoms along with the diarrhea or the diarrhea cannot be contained in the toilet
Fever (defined as a temperature over 101 F orally)	Exclusion is recommended <u>if</u> the student has symptoms in addition to the fever, such as rash, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Fever alone does not require exclusion.
Fifth's Disease	No exclusion necessary , unless other symptoms such as significant fatigue, etc.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease	No exclusion necessary , unless other symptoms
Head Lice	Exclude until after first treatment
Hepatitis A	Exclude until 1 week after symptom onset or jaundice
Herpes (cold sores, fever blisters)	No exclusion necessary unless student is drooling
Impetigo	Exclude until 24 hours after medical treatment started
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) (pink or red color of white of eye <i>and</i> thick yellow/green discharge)	Exclude (bacterial or viral), until approved for return by health care provider or until 24 hours after medical treatment started
Rash <u>with</u> fever, behavior change, joint pain, oozing rash, etc.	Exclusion is recommended <u>if</u> the student has other symptoms in addition to the rash
Ringworm	Exclude from the end of the school day until after first treatment
Shingles	No exclusion necessary , as long as blisters are covered
Stomach ache/Abdominal pain	Exclude <u>if</u> pain is severe; <u>if</u> pain occurs after an injury; or <u>if</u> the student has other symptoms in addition to the stomach ache/abdominal pain
Strep Throat	Exclude until 24 hours after medical treatment started
Vomiting	Exclusion is recommended <u>if</u> the student has vomited more than two times in 24 hours; or <u>if</u> the student has had a recent head injury; or <u>if</u> the student has other symptoms in addition to vomiting
Whooping cough (Pertussis)	Exclude until 5 days after medical treatment or three weeks after cough onset

If your child becomes ill at school and needs to return home, the school office or teacher will notify parent(s). If notified of illness, please arrange to pick up your child right away.

**Based on: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program. (2004). *Infectious Disease in School Setting: Guidelines for School Nurses and Personnel*. Denver, Colorado: Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.