

WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL?

Sometimes it can be difficult for parents to decide whether to send their children to school when they wake up with early symptoms of an illness or complaints that they do not feel well. In general, during cold and flu season, unless your child is significantly ill, the best place for them is in school where they have already been exposed to the same germs and where they are less likely to expose more vulnerable people like the very young or elderly. Remind and show your children to discard used tissues promptly, not to share personal items, to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, and to wash their hands thoroughly and often with soap and water.

However, there are some situations in which it is best to plan on keeping your child home for a day of rest or to arrange for an appointment with your health care provider.

- Persistent fever greater than 100.4 degrees orally, including a fever that requires control with Tylenol. Remember your child must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Child is sleepy or ill from an illness, like vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- Please keep your child home for 24 hours following an episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea during the night or early morning.
- Sore throat that is severe, accompanied by a fever and/or feeling ill that persists longer than 48 hours OR after known exposure to strep throat.
- Significant cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class.
- Honey crusted sores around the nose or mouth that might be impetigo or a rash in various stages OR a rash in various stages that may be chicken pox OR a significant rash accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever.
- Red, runny eyes that distract the child from learning.
- Large amount of discolored nasal discharge, especially if accompanied by facial pain or headache.
- Severe ear pain or drainage from the ear.
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever.
- Any condition you think may be serious or contagious to others.

Whenever there is an outbreak of a specific contagious infection, the school sends out a notice to alert you to watch out for any symptoms. If your child starts to develop symptoms, it is important that you alert your own health care provider that your child had a possible exposure. Be sure to ask your provider when it is safe for your child to return to school, both for your child's health and for the health of the rest of the school.

Finally, if you know your child is still running a fever, it is not a good idea to simply give them Tylenol and send them to school. It is better to let them stay at home in bed and rest until the fever passes. If you find a pattern of your child asking to stay home from school, especially if they are falling behind or appear anxious by the thought of attending school, or if there does not appear to be any obvious physical symptoms, it may be a good idea to contact your school nurse and your health care provider to discuss your concerns.

Remember, whenever you keep your child home from school, please call the school at the start of the day and leave a message that your child will be absent. Any questions please feel free to Lori Keith (518) 638-8243 ext. 518 - she'll be glad to talk to with you!