

Should My Child Go to School Today?

Guidelines for Addressing Childhood Illnesses



How do you determine when to keep your child home from school if you think that they might be sick? The answer isn't always clear. It is not possible to cover all the scenarios, but we have provided a few guidelines for you to consider when making the decision:

- **Fever:** If your child has a fever (a temperature of 100 °F or higher), they should remain at home until they have been fever-free for a full 24 hours (without having taken Tylenol nor Ibuprofen), and they have returned to their typical activities. It's crucial to take your child's temperature before giving fever-reducing medicine to get an accurate readout.
- **Vomiting and/or diarrhea:** Your child should remain at home until they have been without episodes of vomiting or diarrhea for a full 24 hours and have resumed a typical diet. If your child has had either of these symptoms during the night, they should not be sent to school the following day.
- **Cold symptoms:** Runny noses are a fact of life with little ones. However, if the drainage is thick and green or if your child has a persistent or productive cough, please keep your child home from school and consider consulting a physician. A constant dry cough can be a sign of more serious respiratory problems, and a healthcare professional should be consulted.
- **Redness or discharge in the eyes:** Redness of the white part of the eye, burning or itching, yellow or white matter, or crusted eyelashes are the signs of pink eye or conjunctivitis - a very contagious illness. Your child should remain at home until having seen a physician, and the child has been on medication for at least 24 hours.
- **Chickenpox:** Chickenpox is a skin rash consisting of small blisters, which leave scabs. There may or may not be a fever present. Children need to remain at home until all blisters have scabbed over (usually 5-7 days after the first appearance of blisters).
- **Rashes:** Rashes can be difficult to evaluate. Skin rashes of unknown origin should be evaluated by a physician before sending your child to school.
- **Sore throat:** If your child has a persistent or severe sore throat, they should remain at home. You should consider contacting a physician if there is a fever, white patches on the tonsils, swollen and tender glands, headache, or stomachache. These symptoms could indicate a possible strep infection. If that is the case, your child should remain at home until they have had 24 hours of antibiotics and have resumed typical activities.
- **Earache:** If your child complains of ear pain, they should remain at home until a physician can evaluate them.

Please know, these are just guidelines for your consideration. A general rule of thumb would be if in doubt, keep your child home until they can be checked out further or they feel better. I want to stress that this is for the benefit of the whole classroom and the school. In the long run, all students benefit when we prevent germs from being spread to others when students are ill and attending school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child's school nurse.