

## Should My Child Stay Home from School?



Preventing the spread of flu in schools is critical to keeping everyone as healthy as possible. Healthcare professionals recommend that sick children stay home until they're recovered enough to go back to school, typically about 24 hours after symptoms improve. This helps not only to protect your child's health, but also to prevent the spread of the virus to other children.

Determining whether your child is well enough to go to school can be tricky. Consider the following signs as you make your decision.

### **Fever**

If your child has a temperature of 99.5 degrees F or more, it's best to keep him or her home. A fever is a sign that the body is fighting off infection, which means your child is vulnerable, and can also spread the virus to others. Wait at least 24 hours after the fever has come down and stabilized without medication to consider sending your child back to school.

### **Vomiting and Diarrhea**

Vomiting and diarrhea are good reasons for your child to stay home. These symptoms are too difficult to deal with at school, and are signs that the child is still capable of spreading the infection. Wait at least 24 hours after the last episode before considering a return to school.

### **Fatigue**

If your little one is falling asleep at the table or acting particularly fatigued, he or she is unlikely to benefit from sitting in class all day. Make sure your child stays hydrated and let him or her rest.

### **Persistent Cough or Sore Throat**

A persistent cough is likely to be disruptive in class, and is one of the primary ways of spreading a flu infection. If your child has a severe sore throat and a regular or persistent cough, keep him or her home until the cough is nearly gone or easily controlled.

### **Red, Runny Eyes or Rashes**

Red, runny eyes can distract a child from learning and can be difficult to manage in class. A rash can be a sign of another infection, or a reaction to the flu virus. Keep your child home until these symptoms clear up, or until you've checked with the doctor about them.

### **Appearance and Attitude**

Does your child look pale or tired? Does he or she act irritable or seem disinterested in regular daily activities? Are you having a hard time getting your child to eat anything? These are all signs that more recovery time is needed at home.

### **Pain**

Earaches, bellyaches, headaches, body aches, mouth sores, and other types of pain are signals that your child is still in the middle of the flu period. He or she will be contagious to other children and won't gain anything from being in school. Keep your child home until the pain has disappeared.