



Is My Child Well Enough To Go To School?

This guide can help you determine if your child is healthy enough to go to school, or if they need to stay home to prevent the spread of illness. This guide is not intended to replace medical care. If you are unsure what to do, please contact your child's healthcare provider or your school health office. The information below was adapted from the Hennepin County [Infectious Diseases in Childcare Settings and Schools Manual](#).

Students should stay home when:

- They have a **fever** ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$)
 - Students must stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen, Tylenol, Motrin, etc)
- They are **vomiting** (one episode within last 24 hours)
 - Students must stay home for 24 hours after the last episode.
- They have **any rash that may be disease related, or from an unknown cause**
 - Check with your child's physician before returning to school.
- They have **diarrhea**
 - Early Childhood & Preschool Students must stay home until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped
 - School age students can attend school unless they are not feeling well and/or have diarrhea and need to use the bathroom frequently.

For other common childhood illness, please refer to the chart below:

| Disease | Signs and Symptoms | School Exclusion |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Chicken Pox | Mild fever and generalized skin rash (begins on chest, back, underarms, neck, and face) Rash starts as red bumps and within several hours turn into small blisters that scab after a few days | Stay home until all blisters have dried into scabs (usually around 6 days after the rash began) |
| Common Cold | Sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, sore throat, cough, watery eyes, post-nasal drip. Some symptoms can last for up to 10-14 days but should improve over time. Fevers are rare. | Stay home until well enough to participate in routine activities. |
| Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) | Redness, itching, pain, and discharge in/around eye | No exclusion, unless the child has a fever or is not healthy enough to participate in routine activities. |
| Fifth Disease | Rash, possibly low-grade fever or sore throat. Rash typically is an intense redness of the cheeks ("slapped cheek" appearance) at first and spreads to the rest of the body with a fine, lacy, pink | No exclusion if health care provider rules out other rash-causing illnesses |

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| | appearance. | |
| Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease | Low grade fever, runny nose and/or sore throat. Blister-like rash occurs in the mouth, on the sides of the tongue, inside the cheeks, and on the gums (may also be on palms, fingers, soles of feet, or buttocks). Sores may last 7 to 10 days. | Stay home until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in routine activities (okay if sores or rash are still present) |
| Head Lice | Itching of the head and neck. May see lice in hair, eggs/nits glued to hair shaft (usually behind ears and back of neck), and scratch marks on head or back of neck at hairline. | No exclusion, but treatment is recommended before returning to school. |
| Impetigo | Typically begins at a break in the skin (ex: cut, bug bite). Sores form on skin and produce a thick golden-yellow discharge that dries, crusts, and sticks to skin. | If confirmed by health care provider, stay home until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated and sores are drying or improving. |
| Mononucleosis | Fever, sore throat, swollen glands (especially behind neck), headache, tiredness, and sometimes a rash. | No exclusion as long as the student is able to participate in routine activities. |
| Norovirus | Watery diarrhea and vomiting. Low-grade fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, and stomach cramps may also occur. | Stay home until 24 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped. |
| Pertussis (Whooping Cough) | Begins with runny nose, sneezing, mild cough, and low-grade fever. Persistent cough develops after 1-2 weeks. Cough may occur in explosive bursts, sometimes ending in a high-pitched whoop or vomiting. | Stay home until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment begins. If not treated with 5 days of antibiotics, exclude for 21 days following cough onset. |
| Respiratory Viruses <i>*includes COVID-19, RSV, and Influenza</i> | Fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches, fatigue, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or wheezing, muscle or body aches, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea | Stay home until you have been fever free for 24 hours without medication AND all other symptoms have been improving for 24 hours. Consider masking, physical distancing, increased hygiene, and testing for specific illness (COVID-19, flu, RSV, etc) |
| Ringworm | Flat, spreading, ring shaped lesions. Can appear on body, feet (athlete's foot) or scalp. | Stay home until treatment has been started. Child should not participate in gym, swimming, or close contact activities if lesions cannot be covered or until 72 hours after treatment has started. |
| Scabies | Rash (pink bumps or tiny blisters) and intense itching. Rash is often in folds of skin between fingers, around wrists and elbows, armpits, knees, waist, thighs, etc. | Stay home until 24 hours after treatment begins. |
| Streptococcal (Strep) Throat | Sudden fever, red sore throat, and swollen glands. Headache, nausea, abdominal pain, and vomiting may be more common in children. | Stay home until 12 hours after antibiotic treatment begins and child is without fever. |