

When to keep your child home from school

Knowing whether a child is well enough to go to school can be tough for any family. Not only does it come down to whether a child can still participate in school, but also whether they are contagious to others.

1. Bacterial infections - When in doubt, check with the school first. For example, children with bacterial infections may not show any overt symptoms; what may look like “just allergies” or “stomach upset” may be symptoms of a contagious infection. Additionally, children with illnesses such as strep may need a dose (or two) of antibiotics first, which can mean staying home the day after diagnosis.
2. Fever - A child with a fever and no other symptoms is reason enough for a child to stay home. We request that a child not return until at least 24 hours after a fever has broken naturally (without fever-reducing medications). Each child’s normal temperature will vary – as with adults, normal temperatures fall within a range – please work with your child’s provider to determine your child’s normal range. If a student develops a fever while at school, they cannot return the following day.
3. Viruses - Children diagnosed with viral infections can return if symptoms have subsided and they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications (Advil, Tylenol, Motrin, etc.). We recommend precautions be taken for an additional three to five days to prevent spread.
4. Contagious Diseases - Chickenpox sores should be dry and crusted over before sending your child back to school (usually takes about six days). Other contagious diseases like rubella, whooping cough (pertussis), measles, hepatitis A and mumps have specific guidelines for returning to school. Your child’s provider can help you determine when to return.
5. Infestations - Lice, scabies, bed bugs and ringworm should **not** keep your child out of school. If the infestation is found on the student in school the child may stay at school until the end of the day. Children who get their first treatment that afternoon/evening may return to school the next morning.
6. Coughs, Colds, Allergies - Students with colds, occasional cough, or allergy symptoms can come to school if they feel well enough and are fever free. Those who have conjunctivitis (pink eye) or continuous cough can attend if they have been seen by a provider.
7. Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea - consider not sending your child to school if they have nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Children who lose their appetite, are clingy or lethargic, complain of pain, have mouth sores, or who do not seem like themselves should take a sick day. If your child needs more care than the teacher can provide, it is only fair to them and the other students that they stay home and recover.