

Too Sick for School/Childcare?

Parents often wonder what makes a child too sick to go to school, childcare, or camp. The spread of common illnesses, such as flu/colds, gastrointestinal illnesses (diarrhea), pink eye (conjunctivitis), and Strep throat can be limited if children (and adults) who are ill stay home and away from other people.

Is my child too sick to go to school/daycare/camp?

Children/adults with the following symptoms should be kept home until the symptoms go away for a full 24 hours (without the aid of medication):

- Diarrhea (3 or more loose stools in a 24 hour period)
- Vomiting
- Fever
 - Greater than 100.3°F if child has any other symptoms **or**
 - Greater than 101°F if child has no other symptoms

Children (and adults) should also stay home and away from other people if they have:

- Pink eye/Conjunctivitis
 - If the infection is bacterial, stay home until on antibiotics for a full 24 hours
- Strep Throat (until on antibiotics and fever-free for a full 24 hours)
- A bad cough
- Rashes/sores
 - An itchy rash
 - Rash/draining sores that can not be covered
 - Mouth sores with drooling

If your child is sick with any of these symptoms, please contact your child's doctor to see if they need to be seen. If your child has been seen by a doctor and has been cleared to return to school, please tell your child's school nurse or clinic worker.

What can I do to prevent the spread of illnesses?

- **Wash your hands:**
Teach children to wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good alternative, but are not as good as hand washing.
- **Cover your cough:**
Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with their inner elbow or a tissue. Always wash hands after coughing/sneezing.
- **Do not share personal items:**
Items such as drinking cups, utensils, towels, clothes, and combs/brushes may contain germs that can make you sick.

Contact your child's school nurse, clinic worker, or administrator if you have any questions about whether your child is too sick to go to school. You can also contact your local Health Department with questions.