

# Childhood Illness

Here you will find information on some of the more common childhood illnesses we see in school, as well as some further information on Cassia School Districts procedures and nurse recommendations.

## When to Keep Students Home from School

**Fever greater than 100.0 degrees:** A fever lets us know that our body is fighting something off. We are contagious during this time and need rest. Students should be fever free for at least 24 hours, without fever reducing medication, before returning to school.

**Vomiting and/or diarrhea:** Students should stay home for 24 hours to make sure they can keep food/liquids down.

**Sore throat with a fever greater than 100.0 degrees:** Students should stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. If they are diagnosed with Strep throat, then they should stay home until they have been on the antibiotics for 24 hours.

**Excessive coughing that produces thick mucus:** Students should stay home if they are coughing so much it keeps them from participating in class or disrupts their classmates, or they are coughing so hard it is causing vomiting.

**Physician note to return to school;** may be required if a contagious infection is suspected or a serious injury has occurred.

Of course there are always exceptions. Your school nurse is a great resource, please contact her for any questions.

# Common Illnesses Seen at School

**CANKER SORE** is a small ulcer inside your mouth. The specific cause is unknown and they are not contagious. They usually heal on their own without medical treatment.

**CHICKENPOX** is caused by the varicella-zoster virus. It causes an itchy rash and red spots or blisters all over the body. A person is contagious from 2-3 days before the rash appears until every blister has crusted over. Student may return to school once every "pox" has crusted over.

**COLD SORE** is caused by herpes simplex virus type 1. It causes small blisters to form on the lip or around the mouth. They are contagious, washing your hands immediately after touching the blister and not sharing utensils, drinking cups, towels, or razors will help stop the spread. Students may attend school but are instructed not to touch the blisters and to use good hand washing.

**FIFTH DISEASE** is a viral illness, with a very distinctive type rash, often called "slapped cheek disease." You are contagious before the rash ever appears. Student may attend school as long as they are fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit).

**HEAD LICE** are tiny insects that live on the human head. They can be found in the hair. They spread by head to head contact or sharing clothing or personal items like hats/brushes. Student may attend school after treatment with a lice shampoo. Removal of all nits is recommended.

**IMPETIGO** is a bacterial skin infection that develops red sores that can break open, ooze fluid then form a yellow-brown crust. They may develop anywhere on the body but usually form around the mouth and nose. Student may return to school 24 hours after topical antibiotics have been started.

**INFLUENZA** is a viral infection that causes fever, headache, cough, body aches, and fatigue. It is contagious. Students may return to school when they are fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit) for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.

**MENINGITIS** is an infection of the coverings around the brain and spinal cord. There are two main kinds, bacterial and viral. Student may return to school when fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit) for 24 hours and with doctor OK.

**METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA)** is a bacterium that causes infections in different parts of the body. Most often, it causes mild infections on the skin, causing sores or boils. Student may be in school if the infected area remains covered.

**MONONUCLEOSIS**, also called "mono", is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EPA). It can leave you feeling tired and weak for weeks or months. Mono will go away on its own without medical treatment. Student may return to school when fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit).

**PINK EYE** is redness and swelling of the white part of the eye and the inside of the eyelid. It is usually not serious and goes away in 7-10 days without medical treatment. Students may be sent home from school, especially if bacterial conjunctivitis is suspected. Student may stay in school if not bacterial and they are mature enough to keep their hands away from their eyes and use good hand washing techniques. If an antibiotic has been prescribed, student may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic has been started.

**RINGWORM** is caused by a fungus. It looks like a small round patch of red skin, either blistery or dry and scaly, usually in the shape of a ring. It is very contagious and spreads through skin-to-skin contact and when things like towels, hairbrushes, and sports equipment are shared. Student may return to school 24 hours after the start of treatment.

**SCARLET FEVER** is a term used for strep throat with a rash. It is a rough, red rash that feels like sandpaper and usually starts on the chest and abdomen. It is accompanied by a fever and sore-throat and sometimes, bright red spots on the tongue. Student may return to school 24 hours after antibiotics are started and fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit).

**STREP THROAT** is a bacterial infection of the tissue at the back of the throat and tonsils. This causes a sudden, severe sore-throat accompanied by a fever >101, pain and difficulty swallowing and swollen lymph nodes in the neck. Student may return to school 24 hours after antibiotics are started and fever free (<100 degrees Fahrenheit).

**STYE** is an infection that causes a tender red lump on the eyelid. It is usually caused by a bacterial infection in a hair follicle. Student may stay in school.