



Tips for Parents from the School Health Office

Many parents ask, “When is my child sick enough to stay home from school? This is not always an easy question to answer. We hope these tips can help!

A child who is sick will not be able to perform well in school and is likely to spread the illness to other students and staff. We suggest making a plan for childcare ahead of time so you will not be caught without a comforting place for your child to stay if he/she is ill.

We follow the **Illinois Department of Public Health guidelines** for when to keep your child home from school:

- **FEVER** – A fever is a warning that all is not well with the body. A temperature of 100 or over is a sure sign to keep your child home. The child must be 24 hours fever free without fever reducing medication before returning to school. Giving a fever reducer and sending them to school will almost guarantee a call from school when the medicine wears off, as well as exposing other students to your child’s illness.
- **VOMITING/DIARRHEA** – If your child has been vomiting or having diarrhea during the previous evening, please keep them home. Consult your doctor if symptoms continue more than 48 hours or worsen instead of improving.
- **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE** – If your child is diagnosed with a contagious disease, such as strep throat, impetigo, or pink eye, they should be on prescribed antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.
- **RASH** – A rash is a characteristic symptom of infectious diseases. If your child has a rapidly spreading rash or any rash with fever, signs of other illness or behavioral change they need to be evaluated by a doctor.
- **NASAL DISCHARGE/COUGH** – Keep your child home if they have heavy nasal congestion and/or frequent cough. They probably feel miserable and will not be focused on school work, as well as sharing their illness with others.
- **RED, RUNNY EYES** – If your child has crusty, red or weepy eyes with thick or sticky eye drainage, please keep him/her home until evaluated by a medical provider. Prescription medication may be needed depending on the diagnosis.
- **EARACHE** – Consult medical provider without delay.
- **STOMACHACHE** – Consult your medical provider if your child has stomach pain that becomes persistent or severe enough to limit activity, with or without a fever.
- **MALAISE** – Any illness that prevents your child from participating comfortably in class or school activities.

If your child becomes ill at school and the nurse feels he/she is too ill to continue their day or is contagious to others, you will be called to take him/her home. It is essential that your phone number be up-to-date at all times and an emergency number be available in the event that you cannot be reached. Please be sure that arrangements can be made to transport your child home from school. If your daytime or emergency phone numbers change during the school year, please notify the school office immediately.

Thank you,
Angie Smith, RN School Nurse