

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 that 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 children and staff. We suggest planning 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.

To provide as healthy a school environment as possible for students and staff, please use the following guidelines to assist you with decisions relating to your child's health and school attendance. It is considered "best practice" to provide the school with a note from your health care provider for illnesses with absences over three days.

You should not send your child to school if they have:

Covid-19 symptoms (according to the Illinois Department of Public Health) – Symptoms of fever (100.4 or higher), new onset of moderate to severe persistent headache, shortness of breath, new cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or new loss of sense of taste or smell require testing to return to school.

Covid-19 diagnosis – Children with a positive Covid-19 test should not return school for a minimum of 5 days from onset of symptoms. Masking is recommended through day 10. Please speak to your child's nurse for further information.

Common Cold – Irritated throat, clear, whitish, or colored discharge from nose and eyes, sneezing, chills, cough, and general body discomfort. Your child should remain home if symptoms are serious enough to interfere with their ability to learn. Children should remain home with very runny noses and a bad cough especially if it has kept them up all night. **Coughs must be controlled.**

Fever – If a child's temperature is 100.0 or greater, they should remain home until they have been without a fever for a full 24 hours without fever reducing medications.

Vomiting – students must be free of vomiting for a full 24 hours to return to school.

Diarrhea – students must be free of diarrhea for a full 24 hours to return to school.

Sore throat – sore throats may be indicative of strep throat. Strep throat begins with fever, sore, red throat, pus spots on the back of the throat, and tender swollen glands in the neck. High fever, nausea or vomiting may also occur. It is important to remember that strep symptoms range from mild to severe and children may present with only some of the symptoms. For the safety of all students, your child should remain home until they have received a full 24 hours of antibiotic therapy and until they have been without vomiting and fever for a full 24 hours without the aid of medication.

Feeling ill – generalized symptoms of stomachache, cramping, and mild headache should be monitored, and your child should remain home until symptoms are resolved for a full 24 hours.

Pink eye- must be on medication for a full 24 hours before returning to school.

Rash- A physician should evaluate skin rashes of unknown origin before your child is sent to school. A child having any rash of unknown origin will be sent home until cleared by a doctor. Documentation is required stating the rash is not contagious.

Head lice – until your child has been treated and nit free.

If your child becomes ill at school and the school nurse feels your child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children, you will be called to come and take him/her home from school promptly. It is essential that the nurse has a phone number where you can be contacted during the day and an emergency number in the event you cannot be reached. Please be sure that arrangements can be made to transport your child home from school and that childcare is available in case of illness. If your daytime or emergency phone number changes during the year, please notify the health office.

These guidelines are meant to serve the best interests of all the children in school. If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call your school nurse.