

WHEN SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL?

You don't want your student to miss class, but neither do you want to send a sick child to school. Ill children can get sicker and if contagious, other students and staff may contract their illness. Here are a few guidelines to follow:

1. **COLDS:** What seems like a mild cold with symptoms such as a runny nose may indeed be allergies. On the other hand, severe colds, especially those with a fever can be signs of more serious problems (bronchitis, flu, pneumonia or even covid). These children should stay at home.
2. **FEVER:** Any child with a fever should stay home until their temperature is normal for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin. If accompanied by a sore throat, earache, nausea, listlessness or a rash, the child may be contagious.
3. **DIARRHEA OR VOMITING:** Children need to stay home if either occurred during the previous night. Student should be free of vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. Consult a doctor if it persists or is accompanied by a fever, rash or weakness.
4. **STREP THROAT or SCARLET FEVER:** Both mentioned are highly contagious conditions caused by streptococcal (bacterial) infection. With a doctor's permission, a child may return after 24 hours on antibiotics and when symptoms subside.
5. **CONJUNCTIVITIS (Pink Eye):** This is highly contagious. Symptoms of red burning eyes, itching and a discharge are all signs. Conjunctivitis may be viral or bacterial (which requires prescription eye drops or ointment). Children may return after 24 hours of treatment. Practice good hand washing!
6. **EAR INFECTIONS:** This is also contagious and if untreated can cause permanent hearing loss. Follow the same 24 hour rule with antibiotics.
7. **CHICKEN POX:** Children must stay home for at least six (6) days after the last crop of vesicles (pox) appear. Consult your doctor and NEVER give Aspirin or Ibuprofen.
8. **HEAD LICE:** Once brought to school, an epidemic can occur. Children must be out of school until treatment with an appropriate lice shampoo or rinse is completed. Nits should be removed with a comb. Bedding and clothing must be washed in hot water and put in a dryer. Remind children: never share combs, brushes, or hats.
9. **COVID:** <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

If you are not sure about when to keep a child at home or have questions about treatment, call your child's doctor. Above all, remember that good hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of infection.