

Sick Day Guidelines

Should I keep my child home or send him or her to school?

Consider keeping your child home if he or she:

Has a fever

Has been vomiting

Has symptoms that prevent him or her from participating in school, such as:

- Excessive tiredness or lack of appetite
- Productive coughing, sneezing
- Headache, body aches, earache
- Sore throat

A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your doctor as your child needs a special test to determine if it is strep throat.

Keep your child home until his or her fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication. Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to illness.

Does my child have the flu?

The flu is serious! Call your doctor at the first sign of flu symptoms, which typically come on suddenly, including:

- High fever
- Chills
- Headache, body aches, ear ache
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dry cough

If you're unsure about the best way to treat your child's cold or flu, ask your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider.

How do I make my child feel better?

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.

Encourage fluids; like water, soup, juice and ice

How can I prevent my child from getting a cold?

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper handwashing should take about 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice
- Teach your child to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve
- Keep the child's environment tobacco free
- Try to minimize the time your child spends with other children who have cough or cold symptoms
- Keep an annual well-child exam to follow changes in your child's health
- Keep all of your child's immunizations up to date (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines now recommend a flu vaccine for most children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday)
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables.
- After your child is feeling better, clean all surfaces; wash the bedding and air out the room
- Keep surfaces like doorknobs, phones, remote controls, toys, and keyboards clean
- Always make sure to consult your school nurse or doctor if you have any questions