

Quick Reference Guide for Basic School Health

Occasionally children get sick. It is recommended that when any of the following conditions exist, a child should stay home from school. They may also need to be seen by their health care provider for treatment.

Temperature – 100 degrees or above. A fever is a warning sign that all is not right with the body.

Cold/ Flu- both are respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses. Both can cause fever, body aches, a dry cough and tiredness. However, the flu has a tendency to come on quickly and without warning. The flu can cause a fever as high as 103 degrees, severe body aches, headache, and severe weakness.

Strep Throat- The first symptoms are fever, sore throat, and swollen tonsils. This illness is spread by contact with the infected person. The child should be kept home until they have been on antibiotics for 24 hours. The antibiotic should be taken for as long as the health care provider has ordered; this helps prevent further complications.

Vomiting and Diarrhea- indicates an illness that can best be taken care of at home.

Persistent cough- A health care provider should evaluate any heavy or hacking cough. A persistent runny nose with yellow or green discharge should also be evaluated.

Chicken pox and other rashes- Chicken pox is passed from one person to another by direct contact with an ill person. The child is contagious for as long as 5 days before the rash appears to 5 days after the first eruptions. The child should remain at home until all the pox are dry. Although children may be vaccinated there is still a small (1%) chance they could become ill with the virus. *A child with any kind of a rash should be checked by a health care provider before coming to school.*

Lice- are a common problem among school children. The most common sign is persistent itching. Head lice are about the size of a sesame seed. Nits (the egg that the lice lay) are what are most commonly seen. They are located at the base of the hair shaft and are firmly attached – they cannot be easily brushed away like dandruff. Lice are spread through direct contact with someone who is infested by head to head contact. Sleepovers are a common place for transmission. Treatment with special lice shampoo should be started immediately and the directions on the shampoo should be followed carefully. Children may return to school after the 1st shampoo.

Pink eye- When pink eye is present,, the whites of the eyes are red, the lids may be swollen, and the eye tears more than usual. It is easily spread through contact with the infected person or contaminated articles. The child should be kept home until antibiotic drops have been started.