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## SCHOOL AND ILLNESS: SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY HOME?

Parents often have trouble knowing whether their child is too ill to go to school. The following guidelines will help you decide.

### YOUR CHILD IS TOO ILL

- **Fever** – A fever is a warning that the body is fighting an infection that could easily spread to others. A child with a temperature of 100.4 F should not be sent to school; your child should stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications like Tylenol.
- **Cough**– If your child has a severe cough, rapid and/or difficulty breathing, wheezing, or the cough is accompanied by a sore throat or not feeling well, the child should stay home from school.
- **Diarrhea** – Diarrhea is defined as an unusual amount of very liquid stools compared to the child's normal pattern. Children should stay home until able to participate normally at school.
- **Ears** – If your child has pain, swelling, drainage or difficulty hearing, please see your healthcare provider. Untreated ear infections can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss.
- **Rash** – A rash might be the first sign of an illness. If your child has a rash with a fever and behavioral changes, or a rash that is oozing/open wound, or is tender with the rash worsening, your child should be evaluated by a healthcare provider.
- **Sore Throat** – If your child has a sore throat, have the child gargle with warm salt water. If child behavior is normal and the child ate breakfast, it's probably safe to send your child to school. If your child has difficulty swallowing, or you notice saliva building up in your child's mouth because your child can't swallow, please keep your child home. If you notice white spots in the back of the throat please contact your doctor as this could be a sign of an infection.
- **Vomiting / Nausea** – Please keep your child home if your child has vomited more than 2 times in 24 hours, has a fever or if looks or acts ill.

### HOW TO HELP PREVENT ILLNESS:

- **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away after use and wash your hands. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home or work, especially when someone is ill.

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## Watch For These Conditions

### Hand, Foot and Mouth

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease is generally mild and some infected individuals may not have any symptoms at all. The illness usually starts with fever, malaise (overall feeling of being unwell), and sore throat. One or two days after the fever starts, these other signs may develop:

- Painful sores in the mouth or back of the throat.
- Skin rash on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet (may also appear on the knees, elbows, genital area, and buttocks). Rash is either flat or raised, and red, and sometimes has blisters.
- Vomiting and diarrhea.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hand-foot-mouth/about/index.html>

### Influenza:

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with flu will not have a fever.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.html>

