

Infectious Diseases : when can my child go back to school?

Children who have caught certain infectious diseases need to stay away from school or child care until they have completely recovered. This is not only because they need time and lots of rest in order to fully recuperate from their illness. Because infectious diseases are spread by contact with others who are affected, there are regulations about when children can go back to school or child care after contracting these diseases. This is to prevent epidemics of these illnesses happening. Exclusion of sick children (and staff) from child care centres is one of the 3 most important ways to prevent the spread of infectious disease. The others are effective hand washing and immunisation.

Guidelines published by the National Health for exclusion from school or child care are listed below. Of course, even if your child doesn't have one of the conditions on the list, he or she should still always stay away from school if he or she is unwell.

If your child's condition isn't listed, or if you aren't sure how long your child should stay at home, see your doctor.

If children have immunity to these diseases then they don't need to be kept out of school if an outbreak occurs.

STOP, don't go to school
OK to go to school
Depends - see criteria

Condition	Does my child need to stay away if he or she has this condition?	Does my child need to stay away if they have been in contact with a person who has this condition? Do other people need to stay away if they've been in contact with my child who has the condition?
Amoebiasis (Entamoeba histolytica infection)	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.	No
Campylobacter infection	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.	No
Chickenpox (varicella)	Keep your child away until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the spots first appeared in unimmunised children and less in immunised children.	No, unless he or she has immune system problems, such as leukaemia, or is receiving chemotherapy.
Conjunctivitis (acute infectious)	No	No

Cryptosporidium infection	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.	No
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	No	No
Diarrhoea (No organism identified as the cause)	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.	
Diphtheria	Keep your child away until your doctor signs a medical certificate of recovery. Your child must have at least 2 negative throat swabs after antibiotic treatment is finished, to ensure they are fully recovered	Yes. All contacts living in same house should stay away from the school until your doctor or another appropriate health authority clears them to return.
Giardiasis	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours	No
Glandular fever	No	No
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Yes, until child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days.	No
Hand, foot and mouth disease	No	No
Head lice	No, if effective treatment is started before the next day at the facility - that means child does not need to be sent home immediately.	No
Hepatitis A	Yes, until your doctor signs a medical certificate of recovery. Children should stay away until at least 7 days after jaundice begins	
Hepatitis B	No	No
Hepatitis C	No	No
Herpes simplex ('cold sores', fever, blisters)	If your young child isn't able to follow hygiene practices while the cold sore is weeping, then he or she should stay away until it is dry. Cover cold sores with dressings if possible.	No
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV/AIDS)	No. However, if the child is severely immunocompromised they will be vulnerable to catching infections from other people.	No
Hydatid disease (type of tapeworm)	No	No
Impetigo (school sores)	Yes, Until lesions have crusted and healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment.	No

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Stay away until well	No
Legionnaires' disease	No	No
Leprosy	Yes, until your doctor or other health authority gives approval to return	No
Measles	Yes, until at least 4 days after the rash begins.	Not if he or she gets immunised within 72 hours of contact with an infected person. If not immunised, he or she should stay away until 14 days after the appearance of a rash in the last person to be infected. All immunocompromised children should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case.
Meningitis (bacterial)	Yes, until well and has received antibiotics.	No
Meningitis (viral)	Yes, until well.	No
Meningococcal infection	Yes, until antibiotic treatment has finished	No
Molluscum contagiosum (skin infection)	No	No
Mumps	Yes, for 5 days after onset of swelling.	No
Norovirus	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours.	No
Parvovirus (erythema infectiosum - 'fifth disease', 'slapped face disease')	No (Once rash has developed)	No
Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	No	No
Ringworm, tinea	Can return the day after treatment has begun	No
Roseola	No	No
Ross River virus	No	No
Rotavirus infection	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours	No
Rubella (German measles)	Yes, until fully recovered or can go back 4 days after rash started.	No (women of childbearing age working at the school should ensure they are immune to the disease or vaccinated against it).
Salmonella, shigella infection	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours	No
Scabies	Yes, until day after treatment has been started.	No

Streptococcal sore throat (including scarlet fever)	Yes, until your child has had antibiotics for at least 24 hours, and feels well.	No
Thrush (candidiasis)	No	No
Toxoplasmosis	No	No
Tuberculosis (TB)	Yes, until your doctor or other appropriate health authority issues a medical certificate.	No
Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Yes, until your doctor or other appropriate health authority issues a medical certificate.	Not excluded unless a public health authority says so.
Viral gastroenteritis (viral diarrhoea)	Yes, until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours.	No
Warts	No	No
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Yes, until 5 days after antibiotic treatment has begun, or for 21 days from the start of coughing.	Contacts living in the same house who have received fewer than 3 doses of pertussis vaccine must stay away until they have had 5 days of antibiotics. If antibiotics have not been taken, these contacts must be excluded for 21 days after their last exposure to the case while the case was infectious.
Worms (intestinal)	Yes, until treatment has occurred.	No