

# When to Keep a Sick Child Home



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Dear Parent or Guardian:

When a child becomes sick, a determination must be made whether the child should be kept home from school. Staying home when sick is an important way to help prevent the spread of germs that cause illnesses.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that your child be kept home if he/she is not able to take part in normal school activities, the illness causes an unsafe or unhealthy place for others at school, or when the child requires care that cannot be managed at school.

Keep your child home if he/she has:

- **Fever:** Temperature over 100.4° F along with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, or irritability.
- **Vomiting:** two or more times within 24 hours.
- **Diarrhea:** three or more watery stools within 24 hours.
- **An open or oozing sore:** Unless it is properly covered with a bandage that will not leak wound drainage while at school.

There are many other infectious diseases that require a child to remain home from school for a period of time such as strep throat, pink eye, chickenpox, mumps and whooping cough (pertussis). Check with the school first **before** your child returns to school if he/she has had any of these conditions or any other less common infectious disease.

Many diseases are preventable by vaccination including influenza (flu).

For immunization information, contact Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at (253) 798-6410.

*Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 2005.  
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