

Keeping kids home may be a healthy choice

By Michelle Feeney

Knowing when to send your student to school or daycare and when to keep him or her home can be a tough judgment call – especially in the rush of a weekday morning.

When you're wondering how sick is too sick for school, a few general guidelines can help. Keep your child home if:

- He or she has a fever over 100 degrees measured orally or 100.4 degrees.
- Other kids could get sick from being around your child.
- He or she isn't well enough to participate in activities, including outside recess.
- He or she requires more care than school staff can provide without compromising the safety and health of other children.



Scheduling around a sick day for your child can be difficult. **Here are a few tips:** Plan ahead. Make arrangements with friends or family that fill in when you

can't watch your child. Make sure they are on your child's emergency contact list at school. Coordinate with your employer to work from home. Split the "shift" with your significant other, family, or friend. —
Michelle Feeney

Other symptoms that warrant a sick day include:

- Diarrhea and/or vomiting within the last 24 hours
- Abdominal pain for more than two hours, or with fever
- Red eyes with discharge or mucus
- Cough that is disruptive to your child or other students
- Strep throat, until 24 hours after beginning antibiotic treatment
- Abrupt behavior change that includes irritability, constant crying, or lethargy
- Difficulty breathing
- Mucus or blood in the stools
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless your child's doctor has confirmed that he or she isn't contagious
- Lice, until after the first treatment with lice shampoo.
- Rash with fever or behavior changes, until your child's doctor has confirmed that the illness is not contagious
- Measles, until four days after the rash appears
- Chickenpox, until all lesions have crusted or dried

(typically seven to ten days after the rash appears)

- Quickly spreading rash.

If your child has not received their vaccinations and develops a rash or swollen glands, consult with your provider before he or she attends school.

If you are unsure of your child's symptoms, contact your child's primary care provider to see if your child requires an appointment or urgent medical attention.

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