

When to Keep Your Child Home with Illness:

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send children to school when they wake up with early signs/symptoms of an illness or complaints of not feeling well.

A child who is sick will not be able to perform well in school and is likely to spread the illness to other children and staff. The following are situations that warrant keeping your child home for a day of rest or to arrange an appointment with your health care provider.

- 1.) **Fever-** In school aged children, a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher is a clear sign their body is fighting an illness. Fever often accompanies a contagious illness, so it's important to keep your child home from school until he or she is fever free for at least 24 hours. If the fever persists or climbs, see your family physician. To return to school students need to be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, such as Tylenol.
- 2.) **Prior to COVID-19** if your child shows mild signs of an upper respiratory virus or cold, such as cough and/or runny nose, it was considered fine to send them to school as long as there is no fever. We would encourage your child to wash their hands frequently, cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing to help keep germs from spreading. Colds can last for more than a week. When it is at its worst, with heavy coughing, kids may need to stay home and rest. If fever or wheezing develops it is best your child sees your family physician.

Post COVID-19- Pediatric COVID-19 cases have generally been less severe than seen in adults. Relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized, and fewer children experience fever and shortness of breath. It makes it extremely difficult to determine if the mild symptoms your child is experiencing is the common cold or COVID-19 without appropriate testing. Social distancing and everyday preventive behaviors remain important because children with less serious illness and those without symptoms likely play an important role in transmission of disease. To ensure the safety of students and staff (those with and without underlying medical concerns) students who exhibit signs and symptoms of colds i.e. cough, runny nose, fever will be advised to stay home until symptoms are gone or a physician has cleared and advised they may return to school.

- 3.) **Flu Symptoms-** include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, muscle and body aches, headaches and fatigue, some may have vomiting and diarrhea. Student's with flu like symptoms should stay home until symptoms have subsided and they have not had fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medications.

Post COVID-19- It is extremely difficult to determine if flu like symptoms your child is experiencing is the flu or COVID-19 without appropriate testing. Social distancing and everyday preventive behaviors remain important because children with less serious illness and those without symptoms likely play an important role in transmission of disease. To ensure the safety of students and staff (those with and without underlying medical concerns) students who

exhibit flu like signs and symptoms will be advised to stay home until symptoms are gone or a physician has cleared and advised they may return to school.

- 4.) **Vomiting due to illness:** Vomiting is typically short lived, but if your child vomits and feels unwell, it is best if they stay home until 24 hours after vomiting stops. If vomiting lasts more than 24 hours and is accompanied with fever, see your family physician. Some children are diagnosed with GERD, Cyclic Vomiting disease, or have reactions to bus rides, sights and smells. We understand this is not vomiting due to a contagious illness. If your child fits in any of these categories, it is important you discuss these situations with the Nurse's office and your child's teacher.
- 5.) **Diarrhea-** If your child is having frequent bathroom trips or accidents they should stay home until symptoms clear. If diarrhea continues or is accompanied with a fever you should see your family physician.
- 6.) **Sore Throat-** Assessing a sore throat depends on its cause. It is probably fine to send your child to school if it is caused by allergies. If you suspect strep throat, which comes from a bacterial infection, it is best to keep your child home and to seek medical advice. Additional signs of strep throat include throat redness, fever, headache, stomach ache and a rash.
- 7.) **Illness treated by medications-** If your child has an illness that is being treated with antibiotics such as strep throat or pink eye, they need 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school.

Keeping student's home from school can be a burden for working parents and difficult for students who may fall behind on school work. However, sending them to school when they are sick can be detrimental to themselves and their classmates, particularly post COVID-19. Many times parents and/or high school students feel they should come in for a certain class or just to complete a test. If they are ill the Nurse's Office is recommending they speak to and make alternative arrangements with their classroom teachers to accommodate their current illness. These common symptoms are good reason to give your child a sick day. If you are unsure feel free to give the nursing office a call at 316-346-1211, extension 600 or contact your family physician.