

Contagious Childhood Illnesses



A GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS AND DAYCARES



Public Health
April 2010

Illness	What does it look like?	How does it spread?	When is it contagious?	What can parents do at home?	What about going to school/daycare?
Chicken Pox (Viral illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	Pink spots that change into little blisters for 3-4 days then form crusts.	Person to person by direct contact with respiratory secretions from the nose and throat. Indirectly through freshly soiled articles.	Usually 1-2 days before onset of the rash and continuing until all lesions are crusted over (approx 5 days).	Rash is usually very itchy. Keep fingernails short to prevent scarring. Baking soda or oatmeal in the bath helps relieve itchiness.	Child may return when able to participate in regular activities.
Common Cold (Viral illness)	Nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and cough.	Person to person through respiratory secretions from the nose and throat and indirectly spread through contaminated objects and hands.	1 day before symptoms start until 7 days after.	Frequent hand washing. Encourage rest and increase fluids. Cool mist in room for stuffy nose & cough.	Child may return when able to participate in normal activities.
Conjunctivitis "Pink eye" (Bacterial or Viral)	Itchy red eyes with watery discharge or pus.	Direct or indirect contact with discharge from eyes. Spreads easily.	When watery or thick yellow discharge is present.	See doctor for assessment. Wash hands carefully after touching or wiping eyes.	If started on antibiotics exclude for 24 hours.
Fifth Disease (Parvovirus)	Very red rash on cheeks. Looks like child has been slapped. Lace-like rash appears on body. Sore throat, runny nose and slight fever.	Spread by contact with secretions from the nose and throat.	Before the rash appears.	No specific treatment. Pregnant women who have been in contact with someone who has Fifth Disease should consult their doctor.	Child may return when able to participate in normal activities.

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Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Viral illness)	Fever, sore throat, small sore blisters in the mouth and skin rash often on the hands and feet.	Spreads by contact with secretions from the nose and throat, fluid from blisters or feces of the infected person.	Spreads during the acute stage of the illness, and possibly longer.	No specific treatment. Rinsing the mouth with salt water may help to relieve discomfort from blisters. Frequent hand washing.	Child may return when able to participate in normal activities.
Head lice (Pediculosis)	Small insects (approx. the size of a sesame seed). Lice eggs or nits, greyish to cream colour, are the size of a dot.	Close head to head contact with infected person and/or their personal articles that have touched the head.	While lice and nits remain alive.	Contact local Public Health Office for more information. Children should avoid head-to-head contact. Discourage sharing of hats and combs. Treat all infested household members at the same time and again in 7 to 10 days.	Children with head lice should be treated, and should attend school or childcare as usual.
Herpes Virus 1 (HSV-1) "Cold Sores" (Viral infection)	Many infections occur without symptoms. Initial infection usually occurs before the 5 th year of life. Usually appears around the mouth as an ulcer & crusts over in 2-3 days.	Spreads by direct contact with saliva or sores of the infected person.	Usually contagious for 5 days during recurrent cold sores.	Wash hands carefully after touching the ulcer. Best to avoid touching ulcer if possible.	No exclusion period.

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Impetigo (Bacterial infection)	Skin rash beginning with blisters or red bumps. The blisters may ooze or be covered by a crust. Usually appears around the nose or mouth.	Direct contact with infected skin or by touching clothes, towels etc. that have been in contact with infected person's skin.	While lesions are draining. Usually from onset of rash until after 1 full day of treatment.	Wash hands thoroughly after touching infected skin. Do not share hand-towels or facecloths. Seek medical treatment. Keep nails short to prevent spread after touching.	Exclude until 24 hours <u>after</u> starting antibiotics.
Influenza "Flu" (Viral illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	The flu usually comes on suddenly with symptoms such as headache, fever, chills, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches.	Spreads easily person to person through contact with respiratory secretions from the nose and throat and indirectly through contaminated surfaces and hands.	The contagious period varies, usually the day before symptoms appear, up to a week after.	Frequent hand washing. Rest, plenty of fluids, acetaminophen for fever and general body aches. See doctor if child has chest pain, trouble breathing or a fever that lasts more than 3-4 days.	Child may return when able to participate in regular activities.
Measles (Rubeola or "Red Measles") (Viral illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	Fever, runny nose, reddened eyes, dry cough, and red blotchy rash.	Spreads by direct contact with secretions from the nose or throat.	From 4 days before the rash appears until 4 days after.	Report to local Public Health Nurse Treat the fever, may use acetaminophen. See doctor. Encourage rest and plenty of fluids.	Exclude until at least 4 days <u>after</u> the rash appears.
Mononucleosis (Viral illness)	Fever, sore throat, swollen glands, skin rash and fatigue.	Person to person through direct contact with saliva of the infected person.	Not very infectious. Mono can spread for up to a year via throat secretions	Frequent hand washing. Avoid contact with saliva. Do not share drinking containers.	May return when able to participate in regular activities.

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Mumps (Viral illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	Fever, tender swollen glands on one or both sides of the neck and face.	Spreads through direct contact with saliva of an infected person or through contact with respiratory secretions from the nose or throat.	From 7 days before the symptoms appear until 9 days after.	<i>Report to local Public Health Nurse</i> See doctor for treatment. Avoid contact with saliva from infected person. Frequent hand washing.	Exclude for 9 days <u>after</u> symptoms appear.
Pertussis "Whooping cough" (Bacterial illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	Begins with cold-like symptoms. Cough gets worse and occurs in spasms during which the child may vomit. After a coughing spell child may give a loud whoop when breathing in.	Spreads through contact with secretions from the nose or throat of an infected person.	It is highly contagious in the early stages (before cough), up to approximately 3 weeks after spasmodic cough begins. If treated with an antibiotic, the period of contagiousness is usually 5 days or less.	<i>Report to local Public Health Nurse</i> See doctor for treatment. Encourage rest and plenty of fluids.	Exclude until 5 days <u>after</u> starting antibiotic. If not treated child should be excluded for 3 weeks <u>after</u> onset of cough.
Respiratory Syncytial Virus "RSV"	RSV causes acute respiratory illness in persons of any age. Usually begins with a runny nose, cough and fever.	Usually spreads by contact with respiratory secretions from the nose and throat.	It is infectious usually for 3-8 days.	See doctor for treatment of symptoms. Disinfect eating and drinking utensils, toys. Frequent hand washing.	Child may return when able to participate in regular activities.

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Ringworm (Fungal infection)	<p>A red rash that is often ring-shaped.</p> <p>It can be itchy and flakey.</p>	<p>Touching the infected area of a person or animal that has ringworm. Using items such as bed linens, clothing, hats, towels, brushes or toys that were used by a person with ringworm.</p>	<p>As long as lesions are present. Fungus may persist on contaminated articles for long periods of time.</p>	<p>See your doctor. Keep the ringworm area covered until the infection is no longer visible. Wash your hands and personal belongings with hot soapy water. Do not share towels, clothing, hairbrushes or personal items.</p>	<p>No exclusion period</p>
Roseola/ Baby measles (Viral illness)	<p>Roseola starts out with a fever that usually lasts 3-5 days. After the fever disappears the child develops a rash mainly on the face and body. It is difficult to diagnose roseola until the rash has appeared.</p>	<p>Most likely spreads through direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat. Usually occurs in children under 4.</p>	<p>Unknown.</p>	<p>Treatment of the symptoms. Acetaminophen for fever and comfort. Encourage fluids, good hand washing</p>	<p>Child may return when able to participate in regular school activities.</p>
Rubella "German Measles" (Viral illness) (Can be prevented by immunization)	<p>Mild fever with cold-like symptoms. Some people have a rash, or swelling of glands behind the ears.</p>	<p>Direct contact with secretions from the nose and throat.</p>	<p>From 7 days before the rash until 7 days after.</p>	<p>Report to local Public Health Nurse</p> <p>Avoid contact with pregnant women. Encourage rest and plenty of fluids.</p>	<p>Exclude until 7 days <u>after</u> onset of rash.</p>

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Scabies (Parasitic infection)	Intensely itchy rash, especially at night. Usually found around fingers, wrists and elbows.	Direct contact with infected person's skin, or freshly contaminated bed clothing.	While infected person remains untreated.	See doctor for treatment. Wash all personal belongings in hot water and dry at the hottest setting. Everyone in the house should be treated.	Exclude until 24 hours <u>after</u> treatment has started.
Scarlet fever (Bacterial illness)	Fever, sore throat fine rash, flushed cheeks and skin may feel rough like sandpaper.	Spread by contact with mucus from the nose or throat of an infected person.	If left untreated, can infect others up to 21 days.	Frequent hand washing. Treat symptoms and see doctor.	Exclude until 24 hours <u>after</u> starting antibiotics.
Strep Throat (Bacterial illness)	Children with strep throat often have sore throat, sudden fever, headache, and swollen glands in the neck.	Spread by contact with mucus from the nose or throat of an infected person.	With antibiotic treatment the child is not contagious after 24 hours. If untreated can infect others for 10-21 days.	Good hand washing technique, especially after coughing, sneezing, and before preparing or handling foods.	Exclude until 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

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Gastroenteritis " Stomach Flu" (Most commonly caused by a virus)	<p>Viral gastroenteritis is an infection that causes vomiting and /or watery diarrhea. The person may also have headache, fever and stomach ache. The symptoms may last for 1-10 days. It is often called the "stomach flu" but is not caused by the influenza virus.</p>	<p>The viruses that cause gastroenteritis are spread through close contact with infected persons (for example, by sharing food, water, or eating utensils). Individuals may also become infected by eating or drinking contaminated foods or beverages.</p>	<p>The contagious period varies depending what virus is causing the "stomach flu". In some cases the virus can still be present in bowel movements even after the diarrhea has stopped.</p>	<p>Rest, prevent dehydration. Diarrhea can be dangerous if not treated properly. Children with diarrhea need to keep drinking the right amount of fluids to avoid dehydration.</p> <p>See the following website for practical tips. www.caringforkids.com/when-sick/dehydration&diarrhea.htm</p>	<p>Exclude from school or daycare until the person is free of diarrhea and vomiting.</p>

References and suggested websites for parents:

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/protocol/index.html>

www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/gastro/faq.htm

Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, James Chin, 2000

For information on fever management see the following:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/documents/fever.pdf>