

Pediatric Resource: When To Keep Your Child At Home

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Whatcom County Health Department Communicable Disease & Epidemiology Division

Parents and guardians, keep your child home from school if they:

- Are too sick to participate in normal activities
- Need a level of care or observation not manageable at school
- Create an unhealthy or unsafe environment for others

In addition to the above, you should keep your child home with the following symptoms or conditions:

SYMPTOMS	
Diarrhea	Keep your child home until diarrhea can be contained and they can participate in normal activities. Keep your child home if there is blood or mucus in the stool.
Fever	Keep your child home until their temperature is below 100.4°F for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.
Skin infections	Keep your child home if they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draining open wounds that you can't cover with a waterproof dressing. • Mouth sores with drooling. May return after symptoms resolve or a healthcare provider evaluates and treats them.
Vomiting	Keep your child home until they have not vomited for 24 hours and they can participate in normal activities.
SPECIFIC CONDITIONS	
Chickenpox (varicella)	Keep your child home until all blisters have scabs and no new blisters have appeared for at least 24 hours.
COVID-19	Keep your child home for 5 days, then wear a mask on days 6-10.
Flu (influenza)	Keep your child home until they are fever-free for 24 hours.
Measles	Keep your child home until 5 days after rash appeared.
Mumps	Keep your child home until 5 days after swelling began.
Ringworm	Keep your child home until treatment is started.
Scabies	Keep your child home until the day after treatment is started.
Scarlet fever	Keep your child home until they have taken antibiotics for 24 hours and are fever-free.
Shingles	Keep your child home until rash can be covered or all lesions have crusted.
Strep throat	Keep your child home until they have taken antibiotics for 24 hours and are fever-free.
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Keep your child home until they have taken antibiotics for 5 full days.
Other contagious condition	Check with your child's school or healthcare provider.

These conditions do not specifically require you to keep your child home (unless they are too sick to participate in normal activities or have the symptoms in the table above):

- Bronchitis
- Cold (without fever)
- Cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Ear infection
- Fifth disease
- Hand, foot & mouth disease
- Molluscum contagiosum
- Mononucleosis
- Pinworm
- Pneumonia
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
- Warts



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