



When to Keep Your Child Home

The effect on a family with a sick child can be significant. Home, work and school lives are all impacted and often at the least convenient times. It can be difficult deciding when to keep a child home and when to send them to school.

Sickness is a part of childhood, whether it's a fever, sore throat, cough or just not feeling well. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the typical child has 6 to 12 illnesses a year ranging from mild to severe. Families and schools need to balance the child's school attendance with the risk of spreading the illness to others in the school. Sometimes even minor illnesses require the child to stay home just to prevent the further spread of a contagious disease. In addition to consulting your doctor, the following information can help you decide whether to keep your child at home:

1. If your child complains of not feeling well but otherwise has no definite symptoms, your child can likely attend school. The school will call you if something more develops. Be sure to contact your doctor if the complaints persist or other more definite sick symptoms develop.
2. Fever is a symptom of illness and not an actual diagnosis. A child with a fever greater than 99.9 degrees Fahrenheit needs to stay home from school until the fever is gone for at least 24 hours without medication. If the fever lasts 2 to 3 days, or if your child is sick with any fever, call your doctor to have your child evaluated.
3. Many rashes are not reason alone to keep a child home from school. However, a rash with symptoms such as trouble breathing or swallowing, fever, or accompanied by secretions or a runny appearance, should be evaluated by your doctor. Rashes that are itchy or scaly may be contagious and should be evaluated by a doctor before sending a child back to school.
4. Cough alone may not prevent your child from attending school unless it is interfering with a child's sleep or ability to participate in school activities. If the cough is productive and has phlegm or is associated with fever or trouble breathing, keep your child home from school and arrange to have the child seen by their doctor.
5. Stool problems do sometimes require a child to stay home from school. This is especially true with diarrhea where the frequency is more than a couple of times an hour. Diarrhea that is bloody or associated with fever, abdominal pain, or vomiting should be evaluated by your doctor.
6. A child with vomiting, with or without diarrhea, needs to stay home from school. Your child can return to school when the symptoms have stopped and the child can tolerate a regular diet.
7. Children can attend school with mild sore throats if no other symptoms are occurring. Any child with a sore throat associated with fever, vomiting, abdominal pain, or difficulty swallowing should be evaluated by a doctor before returning to school. Call your child's school and ask if strep throat is going around; if so, have your child tested. A child with a diagnosis of strep throat needs to stay out of school until on antibiotics for 24 hours.
8. A child with eye symptoms that include redness, swelling, tearing, itching or burning, mild sensitivity to light, drainage or overnight crusting may have conjunctivitis (pink eye) and will

need to be evaluated by a doctor. The child needs to stay out of school until treated with antibiotic eye drops for 24 hours.

9. If your child appears really sick, keep your child home and arrange an evaluation by your doctor that day. In an emergency call 911 or bring your child to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.
10. Call your doctor's office for advice if you are not sure about your child's condition or have questions about whether your child should stay home from school. Most doctors have an answering service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So, even after hours, you will be able to reach someone for assistance.

Many illnesses can be stopped before they spread by reminding everyone to practice frequent hand washing, blowing noses into tissues, covering mouths when coughing or sneezing. Sometimes staying home is the only way to benefit our kids and teaching staff.

In Romulus Community Schools, if a child presents with any of the above symptoms, parents will be called and the student will be sent home. If a child is seen twice in one day for the same complaint, parents will be called and the student will be sent home.

Understandably, it is difficult for many parents/guardians to keep their children home. We ask that you make plans at the beginning of the year in the event that you have a sick child. Set up a system that you can activate if your child is ill and needs to stay home and also set up a plan for when your child becomes ill at school and needs to be dismissed early. If you have these in place, you will not be caught off guard when the dreaded phone call comes.