

Child Care and Illness: Should Your Child Stay Home?

It is often hard to decide whether your child is too ill to go to childcare. In general, children should stay home if illness keeps them from enjoying the usual activities of childcare. Children should also be kept at home if the illness requires more care than providers can give without affecting the health and safety of other children in their care.

The list below follows Ohio's childcare rules from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Signs of Illness

Your child is too ill to be in childcare if he or she has any of these symptoms:

- Seems very tired and needs bed rest (a common flu symptom)
- Vomits more than 1 time, or has vomiting plus other signs of illness
- Diarrhea (3 or more loose, watery, unformed stools in 24 hours - not caused by a change in diet or medicine), especially if it runs out of the diaper or underwear
- Cough that interrupts normal play or sleep
- Shortness of breath or increased wheezing during normal activity
- Underarm temperature above 100°F especially if there are other signs of illness
- Pain from an earache, headache, sore throat or recent injury that makes it hard to play or sleep normally
- White or yellow eye discharge with pink or red skin inside the eyelid
- Rash with a fever or change in behavior
- Mouth sores along with drooling, unless the doctor decides that the child is not contagious



Picture 1 Your child should not go to childcare if his underarm temperature is **above 100°F**.

Fever

Your child should not go to childcare if his underarm temperature is above 100°F. He may go back to school when it is below 100°F and he feels well enough to play normally.

Contagious Disease

A contagious disease is one that spreads by close contact with a person or object. Nearly all illnesses are contagious; however, not all illnesses are a danger to other children and staff in the childcare.

Many illnesses can be spread 24 hours before your child shows signs of illness. For this reason, keeping a child out of childcare may do little to keep other children from getting sick. Germs are everywhere, especially in the childcare setting. Proper hand-washing, as well as cleaning and disinfecting toys and surfaces are still the best ways to stop the spread of illness.

Children are required to stay away from childcare if they have:

- Lice and scabies – no child care until after the first treatment.
- Impetigo – no child care for 24 hours after treatment starts.
- Strep throat or other strep infections – no child care until child has been taking antibiotics for 24 hours and fever is gone.
- Tuberculosis*.
- Chickenpox*.
- Pertussis – Whooping cough*.
- Hepatitis A*.
- Measles, mumps or rubella*.
- Shingles*.
- Salmonella, shigella, E. coli, Campylobacter, Giardia*.
- Neisseria Meningitis*.

*These illnesses must be reported to the local Health Department. Your child's doctor will tell you when he or she may return to childcare.