

When Should I Send My Child to School?

The suggestions below are for children 5 to 18 years of age.

Recommendations may be different for infants and younger children

Symptoms and Illnesses	Should My Child Go To School?
Fever Fever usually means illness, especially if your child has a fever of 100 or higher as well as other symptoms like behavior change, rash, sore throat, vomiting, etc.	NO – If your child has a fever of 100 or higher, keep them at home until his or her fever is below 100 for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. If the fever does not go away after 2-3 days, you should consult a health care provider.
Diarrhea Frequent, loose or watery stool may mean illness but can also be caused by food and medication	NO – If, your child has diarrhea, keep him or her home. If the stool is bloody, the child has abdominal pain, fever or vomiting you should consult a health care provider.
Vomiting Child has vomited 2 or more times in a 24 hour period	NO – Keep your child at home until the vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. If vomiting continues, contact a health care provider.
Coughing (Continuous) Continuous, uncontrolled, rapid coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing	NO – Keep your child home and contact a health care provider.
Rash or Open Weeping Wounds	NO – If a rash spreads quickly, is not healing, or has open weeping wounds, you should keep your child at home and have him or her seen by a health care provider and cleared to return to school.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) The white of the eye is pink and there is a thick yellow/green discharge.	NO – Your child can attend school after taking antibiotics for 24 hours or upon healthcare provider approval.
Head Lice Intense itching of the head; may feel like something is moving	NO – Once your child has been treated for head lice, and the live lice are removed, your child can return to school.
Strep Throat Sore throat, fever, stomach ache, and red, swollen tonsils	NO – Keep your child at home for the first 24 hours after starting an antibiotic and until fever free.
Parent is Sick, Stressed, Hospitalized	YES – If you are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We are all sick at times so plan ahead for these days. Get a neighbor, relative or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up.
Chronic Diseases (Asthma, Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Epilepsy, ect.) Chronic disease is a long-lasting condition.	YES – Your child should attend school. School personnel are trained to assist your child with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.
Child Doesn't want to go to School Frequent crying, fear, anger, not wanting to socialize, behavior change, stomach ache, nausea (These can be signs of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or fear)	YES – You should keep your child in school, but try to determine what is causing the changes. Talk to school personnel and consult a health care provider. Your child may be experiencing bullying or trauma, may be behind in his or her school work or not getting along with others. These and other issues may require your or school personnel's attention.
Cold Symptoms Stuffy nose/runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	YES – If your child is able to participate in school activities send him or her to school.
Strains, Sprains and Pains	YES – If there is no known injury and your child is able to function (walk, talk, eat) he or she should be in school. If pain is severe or doesn't stop, consult with a health care provider.
Menstrual Issues	YES – Most of the time menstrual (periods) issues should not be a problem. If they are severe and interfering with your daughter attending school, consult with a health care provider.
Vaccine Preventable Disease Chicken Pox – fever, headache, stomach ache or sore throat, then a red itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first and then limbs and face. Measles and Rubella (German Measles) – swollen glands, rash that starts behind ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever and cough, red eyes Mumps – Fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands Pertussis (Whooping Cough) – many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop", vomiting, very tired	NO – Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.



This information is based upon recommended guidelines from reliable sources to include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, Public Health Association. Adapted with permission from: [The Alameda County Public Health Department](#)