

**GUIDE TO CHILDHOOD ILLNESS**  
 Recommendations for Parents and Childcare Facilities  
*From the Iowa Department of Public Health*

ILLNESS	WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT TO DO	WHEN CHILD CAN RETURN TO CHILDCARE
5 <sup>th</sup> Disease	Fever, headache, and very red cheeks. Lace-like rash on chest, stomach, arms and legs that lasts 3 days to 3 weeks. Rash may disappear then reappear.	Contact physician and ask about over-the-counter (OTC) pain/fever medication. Give plenty of fluids. Prevent scratching.	<b>When fever is absent for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.</b>
★ Chicken Pox (Varicella)	Itchy, blistery rash, and mild fever. Blisters usually occur in bumps on stomach, chest and back. After several days, blisters scab over.	Contact physician. Calamine lotion or baking soda in bath can soothe itching. Prevent scratching.	<b>When all blisters are crusted and there are no oozing scabs.</b>
Cold Sores & Mouth Sores	Fever and small, painful fluid-filled or red blisters on mouth, gums, or lips.	Sores should be kept as dry and covered as possible. Do not allow children to share toys.	<b>Child does not need to miss childcare unless drooling. Then contact physician before returning to childcare.</b>
Ear, Nose and Chest Infections	May include mild symptoms such as cough, runny nose, watery eyes, sore throat, chills and tiredness associated with the common cold, croup, pneumonia, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), bronchitis, and ear infections.	Contact physician and ask about OTC pain/fever medication. Wash hands often.	<b>If fever is not present and child can fully participate in activities, child does not need to miss childcare.</b>
Diarrhea	Child's bowel movements are more frequent, loose and watery than usual. Stool may contain blood.	Make sure child gets plenty of rest and drinks plenty of clear fluids. If symptoms continue, fever occurs, or blood appears in stool, contact physician. Wash hands frequently.	<b>When diarrhea is gone and child feels better.</b>
Fever	An increase in body temperature; fever does not always indicate serious illness. Oral temperature of 101 degrees. Most common causes include: illness, teething, vaccinations.	Contact physician if child is uncomfortable, has change in behavior, or if other symptoms of illness are present. If child under 8 weeks of age has an armpit temp of 100 degrees, contact physician.	<b>Child does not need to stay home unless child has a fever AND behavior changes and/or signs or symptoms of illness.</b>
★ Flu (Influenza)	Fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches, and/or extreme sleepiness. Children with the flu may have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea but never without respiratory symptoms.	Contact physician and ask about OTC pain/fever and antiviral medication. Make sure child gets plenty of rest.	<b>When vomiting/diarrhea is gone and child feels better. Fever must be absent a minimum of 24 hours without fever reducing medications.</b>
★ Hepatitis A	Stomach pain, sick feeling, fever, and diarrhea. Skin and whites of eyes may have yellow tint.	Contact physician IMMEDIATELY.	<b>One week after symptoms appear.</b>
Impetigo	Skin sore with a yellow, honey colored scab. It may ooze and drain. Most sores are on face, around the nose and mouth.	Contact physician, who may prescribe medication or directions on caring for scabs. Wash hands frequently.	<b>24 hours after medication is first given.</b>
Lice	Lice (bugs) and eggs (nits) in hair near scalp, especially on top of head, behind ears, and nap of the neck. Frequent scratching.	Use shampoo and cream rinse daily for 14 days. Comb hair with a fine-toothed comb while cream rinse is in hair.	<b>After the first shampoo treatment and no live bugs are present.</b>
★ Meningitis (Viral or Bacterial)	Fever, headache and stiff neck are common symptoms in anyone over 2 years old. Newborns and infants may appear overly sleepy, or inactive, be irritable, vomit or feed poorly.	Contact physician IMMEDIATELY. Viral meningitis is only spread by contact with an infected person's stool. Bacterial can be spread through the air, so close contacts may be given medication to prevent illness.	<b>Children with bacterial meningitis may return to childcare 24 hours after medication is first given. Children with viral meningitis when child is feeling better and fever is gone.</b>
★ Mumps	Fever and swollen/sore glands in neck. May have cough and runny nose.	Contact physician and ask about OTC pain/fever medication. Give plenty of fluids.	<b>5 days after symptoms first appear, or when symptoms are gone (whichever is longer).</b>
Pink eye (Purulent conjunctivitis)	Eyes are red/pink with creamy or yellow discharge; eyelids may be matted after sleep. Eyelids and area around eyes may be swollen or irritated, and painful. Fever may be present.	Contact physician; eye drops will likely be prescribed. Wash hands frequently. Avoid rubbing the eyes.	<b>24 hours after medication is first administered or all symptoms are gone.</b>
Rash illness	Usually red, splotchy areas on the skin, sometimes with bumps that may or may not be whitish in color. Child may have fever or behavioral change.	Contact physician if child develops fever and/or experiences behavioral change.	<b>When fever is gone and behavior has returned to normal.</b>
Ringworm	Ring shaped, scaly spot on skin or head. May leave a lighter spot on skin or a flaky patch of baldness on head. May have a raised donut-shaped appearance.	Contact physician. Ringworm is spread by skin-to-skin contact. Cover the area with a bandage and prevent sharing of personal items like blankets and clothes.	<b>Child may return to care as long as infected area is completely covered.</b>
Scabies	Severe scratching that may be worse at night. Small red bumps on the skin or between fingers, on wrists/elbows, in armpits, or on waistline.	Contact physician.	<b>24 hours after treatment has begun.</b>
Strep throat	Sore throat, hard to swallow, fever, enlarged glands and extreme fatigue.	Contact physician. Give medication for amount of time prescribed.	<b>24 hours after medication is first administered.</b>
Vomiting	Common causes of vomiting are illness and upset stomach.	Contact physician if fever is present. Contact physician immediately if child cannot keep fluids down for more than 24 hours.	<b>When all symptoms are gone.</b>
★ Whooping cough (Pertussis)	Persistent, deep-sounding cough. Some children may have a "whoop" sound to their cough. Some may vomit or lose their breath.	Contact physician. Give medication for amount of time prescribed. Physician may prescribe medication to close contacts to prevent spread.	<b>After 5 days of medication or 21 days of cough if no medication is given.</b>

★ = Immunization is available.