

## Illnesses and Child Care

Young children typically get 5 to 10 illnesses every year. These illnesses are caused by a variety of germs. Children in group settings tend to have more illnesses because they share their germs with each other. Germs are spread from person-to-person by direct contact, through the air, or on contaminated objects. While there is no way to prevent all illnesses in child care settings, there are many things that parents and child care providers can do to reduce sickness.

Most child care programs are licensed to care only for well children. If a child is ill and comes to a group care setting, that child exposes the rest of the children and the staff. Child care providers do not have the time to provide the attention that an ill child needs.

**Children who are ill should not be brought to child care. If a child becomes ill while in care, they should be isolated from the rest of the group and picked up immediately.**



## What the Child Care Should Do

- **Conduct daily health checks** – personally greet each child when they arrive for the day and check them for signs of illness.
- **Ask parents about symptoms** – if staff notice unusual symptoms or behavior with a child, call parents and ask about possible causes. Encourage open communication between classroom staff and parents.
- **Be firm and consistent about following the policy** – do not "give in" when parents hesitate to pick up a sick child and do not accept ill children into care.
- **Notify parents of infectious diseases** – if a child in your care has been diagnosed with an infectious disease, inform the parents of the other children who may have been exposed. The Communicable Disease Outreach Program has sample parent letters and fact sheets for most illnesses. When illness occurs call us at 425.339.5278 for guidance and visit our website for more information.
- **Get clear, written instructions from parents** – about giving medications to ill children. Keep consistent documentation on any medication given to a child. Understand that antibiotics are used to fight illnesses caused only by bacteria, not viruses.
- **Notify the Snohomish Health District** – if a child is diagnosed with a reportable disease, it is required that you contact the Communicable Disease Program at 425.339.5278 for further information and guidance.

Call the Snohomish Health District Communicable Disease Outreach Program if you have additional questions about handling illnesses in your child care program. We can also help write exclusion policies and provide handouts to share with parents.



## Dealing with Illness

in child care settings

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HEALTHIER SNOHOMISH COUNTY

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## Information for Parents

Parents need to take responsibility for the health of their children and the health of other children at the center. Review your child care's health policy. Understand the exclusion guidelines the center will follow for your child and the other children in their care. Discuss with your child care provider steps that they will take to prevent the spread of germs in the environment – such as handwashing, cleaning, sanitizing, and proper diapering and toileting practices. Have open lines of communication with your child's teachers. Make sure to tell them if you have any concerns about your child so they can be on the look out for signs of illness.

Keep ill children home. Take the time in advance to arrange for back-up care in the event your child becomes sick.

- Be familiar with your employer's policy on staying home if your child is sick
- Talk to family members, friends, or neighbors to see if they would be available to care for your child
- Have a back up plan if you are unable to leave work to pick up a sick child



If you take your child to the doctor, get a diagnosis from the health care provider in writing. Let the child care know what the diagnosis is. If your child needs any medications, make sure you get clear **written** instructions from the health care provider. Child cares have very strict policies on medication administration.



Take steps at home to help keep your child healthy. Such things as frequent handwashing, safe food preparation, serving healthy meals, drinking plenty of water, getting lots of exercise, and keeping up to date with immunizations and well-child visits to the doctor can go a long way in preventing illnesses.

If you have any questions about dealing with sick children in child care settings, please contact your health care provider or the Communicable Disease Outreach Program at Snohomish Health District at 425.339.5278.

## Exclusion Guidelines

The following are general guidelines regarding how long to exclude ill children from group care. Remember that each child care program will have its own exclusion guidelines and illness policies. Parents need to be aware of and respect the policies of their child care program. Children who are too sick to participate in the normal activities should be kept home.

<b>Chickenpox</b>	Until all blisters are crusted over (usually 5 to 6 days after the rash started)
<b>Cold Sores</b>	No exclusion necessary
<b>Common Cold</b>	No exclusion necessary if child feels well enough to participate in activities
<b>Cytomegalovirus</b>	No exclusion necessary
<b>Diarrhea</b>	Until diarrhea stops or until determined it is not a symptom of an infectious disease
<b>Ear Infection</b>	No exclusion necessary
<b>Fever</b>	If temperature is over 100°F or higher under the arm <u>and</u> a sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, pain, irritability, confusion, or other symptom
<b>Fifth Disease</b>	No exclusion necessary
<b>Hand, Foot, &amp; Mouth Disease</b>	No exclusion necessary if child feels well enough to participate in activities
<b>Head Lice</b>	Until after treatment is started and no nits are present
<b>Impetigo</b>	Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started
<b>Infectious Mononucleosis</b>	No exclusion necessary if child feels well enough to participate in activities
<b>Pinkeye (Bacterial)</b>	Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started
<b>Pinkeye (Viral)</b>	Until no drainage is present
<b>Pinworms</b>	Until treatment is started
<b>Rashes</b>	Until determined the rash is not a symptom of an infectious disease
<b>Ringworm</b>	Until treatment is started
<b>Roseola</b>	No exclusion necessary
<b>Rotavirus diarrhea</b>	Until diarrhea stops
<b>Scabies</b>	Until treatment is started
<b>Sore Throat</b>	Until determined the sore throat is not a symptom of an infectious disease
<b>Strep Throat</b>	Until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment is started <u>and</u> fever is gone
<b>Vomiting</b>	Until vomiting stops or until determined the vomiting is not a symptom of an infectious disease
<b>Yeast Infections</b>	Until treatment is started