COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment

How Sick is Too Sick?

When Children and Staff Should Stay Home from School or Child Care

During Colorado's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, children and staff who have been exposed to a positive case or who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 listed below, must follow the Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools. Testing for COVID-19 is strongly recommended for anyone with symptoms or a known exposure. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, this guidance may be used to determine when children and staff may return to school or child care.

MAJOR SYMPTOMS of COVID-19	MINOR SYMPTOMS of COVID-19
• Feeling feverish, having chills or temperature of 100.4°F or greater • Loss of taste or smell • New or worsening cough • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	• Sore throat • Runny nose or congestion • Muscle or body aches • Headache • Fatigue • Nausea, vomiting • Diarrhea

There are four main reasons to keep children and adults at home:

1. Someone who the child or staff lives with or has had close contact with who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19.
2. The child or staff member does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities. For example, a child is overly tired, fussy or will not stop crying.
3. A child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
4. The symptom or illness is on this list, and staying home is required.

Remember, the best ways to stop the spread of infection is staying home when sick and good hand washing.

Symptoms	Child or staff must stay home?
Coughing	**Yes -** Is the cough new and unrelated to an existing chronic condition? If the cough is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline, then follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, they may return to school or child care as long as the cough has been resolved for 24 hours unless the cough is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the cough is explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.

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Symptoms	Child or staff must stay home?
Diarrhea Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine.	**Yes** - Is the diarrhea new and unrelated to an existing chronic condition? If the diarrhea is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline, then follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, they may return to school or child care 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the diarrhea is explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.
Fever Fever is a temperature of 100.4°F or greater. Babies who are 4 months or younger need to see a doctor right away for a fever of 100°F or higher.	**Yes** – Follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, they may return to school or child care if the fever has been resolved for 24 hours without fever reducing medications unless the fever is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the fever is explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.
Minor Symptoms of COVID-19 Sore throat Runny nose or congestion Muscle or body aches Headache Fatigue	**Yes -** Follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, they may return to school or child care as long as the symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours unless the symptoms are caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the symptoms can be explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.
New Loss of Taste or Smell	**Yes** – Is the loss of taste and smell unrelated to severe congestion? If yes, follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools.
Vomiting/Throwing Up	**Yes** – Is the vomiting new and unrelated to an existing chronic condition? If the vomiting is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline, then follow the COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. When the guidance for COVID-19 instructs children and staff to follow their regular return to school illness policy, they may return 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting unless the vomiting is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the vomiting can be explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness. **If a child with a recent head injury vomits, seek medical attention.**

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Illness	Child or staff must stay home?
Chicken Pox	**Yes** - until the blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days).
Conjunctivitis (pink eye) Pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	**No** – children and adults do not need to stay home unless they have a fever or are not able to participate in usual activities. Call your doctor for advice and possible treatment.
COVID-19 symptoms may include any of the following: **New loss of taste or smell** **Fever or chills** **Fatigue** **New or unexplained persistent cough** **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing** Sore throat Runny nose or congestion Muscle or body aches Headache Fatigue Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea	**Yes –** children and staff who have been diagnosed with COVID–19 must be excluded until: 1. The child or staff member has not had a fever for 24 hours, **AND** 2. Other symptoms have improved (example, the cough or shortness of breath has improved), **AND** 3. At least **10 days** have passed since the symptoms first appeared. Prior to diagnosis, children and staff with symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19 should follow COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools the exclusion guidelines for COVID-19 found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools. Testing is strongly recommended for anyone with symptoms of or known exposure to COVID-19.
Fifth's Disease	**No** – the illness is no longer contagious once the rash appears.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)	**No** - unless the child or adult has mouth sores, is drooling and is not able to take part in usual activities.
Head Lice or Scabies	**Yes** - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment.
Hepatitis A	**Yes** – children and staff may return to school or child care when cleared by the health department. **Children and staff should not go to another facility during the period of exclusion**.
Herpes	**No** - unless there are open sores that cannot be covered or there is nonstop drooling.
Impetigo	**Yes** – children and adults need to stay home until antibiotic treatment has started.
Ringworm	**Yes** - children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment. Keep the area covered for the first 3 days if participating in sports with person to person contact.
Roseola	**No** - unless there is a fever or behavior changes.
RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	**Yes** – For any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, follow COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools the exclusion guidelines for COVID-19 found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools.

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Illness	Child or staff must stay home?
Strep Throat	**Yes** - for 12 hours after starting antibiotics unless the doctor says that it is okay to return to school sooner. Children and staff also need to be able to take part in usual activities. For any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, follow COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools the exclusion guidelines for COVID-19 found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools.
Vaccine Preventable Diseases Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	**Yes** – Children and staff can return to school once the doctor says they are no longer contagious.
Yeast Infections Thrush or Candida diaper rash	**No** - follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
Other Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home. For any symptoms consistent with COVID-19, follow COVID-19 Guidance for Cases and Outbreaks in Child Care and Schools the exclusion guidelines for COVID-19 found at https://covid19.colorado.gov/cases-and-outbreaks-child-care-schools.

This document was developed in collaboration with the Children's Hospital of Colorado School Health Program.
The information presented is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of your personal doctor's advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information should not be used in place of a visit, call or consultation or advice of your doctor or other health care provider.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide.* Aronson SS, Shope TR, eds. 5th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020.20.
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