

A Guide to Common Infections

DISEASE	HOW IT IS SPREAD	SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS	WHEN IS IT CONTAGIOUS	WHEN TO EXCLUDE FROM SCHOOL	REPORT TO PUBLIC HEALTH
Respiratory Infections			Do not give ASA; acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin)		
<i>Common Cold</i>	Spreads person to person via droplets; indirect spread via contaminated hands, objects, surfaces. Almost always viral.	Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, decreased appetite. Fever with some colds.	One day before to five days after onset.	Do not exclude unless too ill to take part in the activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit. Frequent hand washing is important.
<i>Ear Infections (Otitis Media)</i>	Complication of cold.	Earache or irritability, fever and cold symptoms.	Not infectious.	Do not exclude unless too ill to take part in the activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Influenza</i>	Virus spreads through air in enclosed spaces, by direct contact with respiratory secretions or indirectly by contact with contaminated hands, objects, surfaces. Incubation period 1-3 days.	Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, generalized aches and pains, loss of appetite, cough. Weakness and cough can last several days to weeks.	Before symptoms have developed until 5-7 days after onset of symptoms.	Exclude until well enough to participate. Usually 5-7 days.	Report to Health Unit. Influenza can result in serious complications for the elderly and those with chronic health problems.
<i>Strep Throat Scarlet Fever</i>	Bacteria spreads person to person through respiratory droplets or direct contact with a symptomatic person or asymptomatic carrier. Rarely spread indirectly through contaminated surfaces. Incubation period 1-3 days.	Fever, sore throat. General discomfort and tender glands on the neck. Sandpaper-like rash on neck, chest, in folds of axilla, elbow, groin, and inner surface of the thighs. Face looks flushed.	Until 24 hours after treatment begun. If untreated 10-21 days.	Exclude until 24 hours after the start of antibiotics.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Whooping Cough (Pertussis)</i>	Bacteria which is spread from person to person by respiratory droplets, and direct contact with respiratory secretions. Rarely, through indirect contact with surfaces. Very infectious. Incubation period 6-20 days.	Begins as cold with runny nose and cough. Cough gets gradually worse and occurs in spasms, characterized by inspiratory 'whoop'. Fever uncommon.	From onset of runny nose until 3 weeks after onset of paroxysmal cough with whooping (if not treated with antibiotics).	Exclude until 5 days after start of antibiotics or 3 weeks from onset of paroxysmal or 'whooping' cough if no treatment is given. Contacts may need antibiotics or vaccine.	Report to Health Unit. Parents and staff should be notified.
Gastrointestinal Infections			Do not give Aspirin		
<i>Campylobacter</i>	Bacteria excreted in stool. Can be found in poultry, beef, unpasteurized milk or other food. Contaminated water may be source of infection. Infected pets and farm animals may also be a source. Incubation period 1-10 days.	Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stool, abdominal cramps, and malaise.	For duration of diarrhea. If untreated, can shed bacteria in stool for 2-7 weeks.	Exclude until diarrhea is gone and symptom free for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit.
<i>Cryptosporidiosis</i>	Parasite excreted in stool of infected persons and animals. Spreads person to person and through contaminated food or water. Incubation period 2-14 days, average 7 days.	Watery, non-bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps and sometimes fever, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting. Fever and vomiting are common in children. Symptoms may last 1-2 weeks or as long as a month. Symptoms can come and go over time.	From onset of diarrhea until several weeks after symptoms resolve.	Exclude until diarrhea is gone and no other symptoms for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit. Immunocompromised people are at risk of serious complications.

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<i>Diarrhea</i>	Germ is spread through the stool of infected persons. Spread directly from person to person; indirectly from hands of staff and children, objects, surfaces, food, or water contaminated with germs (young children frequently put fingers and objects in mouth).	Increase in frequency of stools and/or change to unformed, loose, or watery stool. Fever, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, mucus or blood in stool may also occur. Diarrhea may be dangerous in infants and young children because the loss of fluid may cause dehydration.	For duration of diarrhea.	Exclude children until diarrhea is gone or physician determines child is not infectious. Notify parents at once if any of the following are present: 2 or more episodes of diarrhea or diarrhea with fever over 39°C (102°F); repeated vomiting; dehydration; blood or mucus in stool.	Report to Health Unit outbreaks of 2 or more children having diarrhea occurring within 48 hours, also any case of bloody or diagnosed bacterial diarrhea.
<i>Escherichia coli (E. coli 0157:H7)</i>	Spreads through food or water contaminated with human or animal feces. Person to person spread is found in families, child care centres, and custodial institutions. Incubation period 2 to 8 days. Usually 3-4 days.	Mild diarrhea to blood in stool, abdominal cramps, Generally, no fever present.	For duration of the diarrhea.	Exclude until no diarrhea or other symptoms for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit.
<i>Giardia</i>	Parasite in stool of infected persons. Spreads person to person. Common in child care settings. Incubation period 3 - 25 days or longer. Average 7-10 days.	Most children have no symptoms. May have diarrhea, loss of appetite, bloating, abdominal cramps, pale and greasy foul smelling stools, excessive gas, fatigue, weight loss.	Often months.	Exclude until treated and no diarrhea for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit.
<i>Hepatitis A</i>	Virus excreted in stool of infected persons. Spreads person to person by the fecal-oral route; may also be spread in contaminated food or water. Incubation period 15-50 days.	Most children have no symptoms. May have fever, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, followed in a few days by jaundice (yellow colour in skin and eyes).	2 weeks before to 1 week after onset of jaundice.	Exclude for 1 week after onset of jaundice (or illness if no jaundice is present).	Report to Health Unit. Vaccination is available for susceptible contacts.
<i>Norwalk Virus</i> <i>Norwalk-like Virus</i>	Virus excreted in stool or vomit of infected persons. Spreads person to person through the fecal-oral route. Vomiting can cause the virus to become aerosolized and infect food, water and surfaces. Incubation period 1-2 days.	Diarrhea and vomiting accompanied by abdominal cramps, headache, malaise, myalgia, low grade fever. Symptoms persist for 24-48 hours.	During acute stage of illness and up to 48 hours after the diarrhea has stopped.	Exclude until 48 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.	Report outbreaks to the Health Unit.
<i>Rotavirus</i>	Germ is excreted in stool of infected persons and spreads person to person through the fecal-oral route. May also spread via contact and through respiratory secretions. Incubation period is 1-3 days.	Fever and vomiting precede watery diarrhea. Dehydration may occur rapidly. Symptoms usually last for 4 -6 days.	During the acute stage of illness through to the 8 th day of infection.	Exclude until 48 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.	Report outbreaks to Health Unit. Emphasize proper handwashing.
<i>Salmonella</i>	Acquired mainly from contaminated food, including eggs and egg products, beef, poultry, unpasteurized milk, and produce. Incubation period 6-72 hours. Average is 12-36 hours.	Sudden onset of headache, abdominal pain, diarrhea and nausea. Sometimes vomiting is present. Fever is common. Anorexia and diarrhea tend to persist for several days.	While having diarrhea. Can be several days to several weeks.	Exclude until 24 hours after diarrhea has stopped.	Report to Health Unit. Treatment is usually not indicated. Excellent hand hygiene is important.
<i>Shigella</i>	Bacteria excreted in stool of infected persons. Spreads person to person by indirect or direct fecal-oral transmission. Also spread in contaminated food, water or milk. Flies can be vectors. Incubation period 1-7 days.	Diarrhea, fever, blood and/or mucus in stool, abdominal cramps. Symptoms usually last 48-72 hours.	For duration of diarrhea. Highly infectious. If untreated up to 4 weeks. Asymptomatic carriers may transmit infection. The carrier state may persist for months.	Exclude until diarrhea is gone and no other symptoms for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit. Emphasize proper handwashing.

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Skin and Scalp Infections (Refer to School Board policy for Head Lice) Do Not give Aspirin					
<i>Chickenpox (Varicella)</i>	Spreads person to person by direct contact, droplet or airborne spread of fluid from vesicles or secretions of the respiratory tract. Indirectly through articles freshly soiled with secretions from vesicles. Very infectious. May develop following contact with person having shingles. Incubation period 14-21 days.	Sudden onset of mild fever. Small red pimples which develop into blisters, then become encrusted. Occurs in successive crops, and tends to affect face, hands, neck and extremities.	Up to 5 days before onset of rash and lasting until lesions have crusted (about 5 days).	Return to school or childcare as soon as child is well enough to participate normally in all activities (regardless of the state of the rash).	Report to Health Unit. Vaccine available. Staff and parents should be notified. Susceptible pregnant staff will need to seek medical care promptly.
<i>Shingles</i>	Reactivation of chickenpox. If a person who has never had chickenpox touches the rash of a person with shingles, they may develop chickenpox.	A rash, often with blisters, that may be painful, usually on one side of the body.	Up to one week after the rash develops. No longer infectious once all the blisters have crusted.	Return to school or childcare as soon as child is well enough to participate normally in all activities (regardless of the state of the rash). Where possible, the rash should be kept covered.	Not reportable. May seek guidance from Public Health, as vaccine for chickenpox is available for susceptible contacts.
<i>Herpes Simplex (Cold Sores)</i>	Virus spreads person to person by direct contact with saliva and infected sores.	Many infections occur without any symptoms. May cause high fever, many painful ulcers in and around mouth. May recur as cold sores.	For several weeks during initial infection and intermittently thereafter especially when cold sores return.	Exclude if too ill to participate. Avoid direct contact with lesions or cold sores.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Impetigo</i>	Bacteria spreads person to person by direct contact. Caused by same bacteria that causes strep throat.	Pustules or crusted rash on face or exposed parts of body (arms and/or legs).	From onset of rash until 1 day after start of treatment with antibiotics.	Exclude until antibiotic treatment has been taken for 1 full day.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Ringworm</i>	Spread by direct or indirect contact with lesions of infected persons or animals. Indirectly through contaminated floors, shower stalls and benches. Incubation period 4-14 days depending on type of ringworm.	Depending on type of ringworm, may cause circular lesions on skin or scalp. Lesions may have slightly raised, red edges and may be dry and scaly. Other types of ringworm may affect the skin between the toes (Athletes Foot) or the nails.	While lesions are visible.	Exclusion is not required. Treatment is important. Avoid contact sports until cleared by a physician to return to sports.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Scabies</i>	Mites spread person to person by prolonged direct close contact. Incubation period 2-6 weeks in persons without previous exposure. 1-4 weeks in those previously exposed.	Very itchy rash. Usually appears on fingers, elbows, armpits and abdomen.	Until mites and eggs are destroyed by treatment. Usually after 1 or occasionally after 2 courses of treatment a week apart.	Exclude until 24 hours after treatment is first applied.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Other Infections Do not give Aspirin					
<i>Cocksackie A (Hand/Foot/Mouth Disease)</i>	Virus spreads person to person through direct contact with nose and throat discharges and faeces of infected people or by aerosolized droplets. Incubation period 3-5 days.	Fever, headache, sore throat, lack of energy. Small painful ulcers in mouth. Rash consists of red spots often topped by small blisters on hands and feet.	Communicable during acute stage of illness; can continue to transmit virus in stools for weeks. Most common in summer and fall.	Do not exclude unless too ill to participate.	Not reportable to the Health Unit.
<i>Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)</i>	Bacteria spreads person to person by contact with secretions from eye or respiratory secretions. Indirect through contaminated clothing and other articles. Incubation period usually 24-72 hours.	Redness, swelling, itching, pain, discharge from eye. After sleep the discharge forms dry, yellowish crusts on eyelashes.	For duration of infection or until 24 hours after treatment has started.	Exclude if yellowish discharge present and then until the antibiotics have been taken or dropped into eyes for one full day.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
<i>Fifth Disease</i>	Virus mainly spreads from person to person through contact with respiratory secretions. Incubation period is 4-20 days to development of rash.	Usually afebrile, very red rash begins on cheeks (slapped face appearance) followed by a lace-like rash on the trunk and extremities which fades but may come and go for 1 to 3 weeks.	Greatest before onset of rash. Probably not communicable after onset of rash.	Do not exclude if well enough to take part in activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit. In consultation with Public Health, notify pregnant teachers and parents who may have had exposure.

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<i>Hepatitis B</i>	Virus found in blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Can be spread by unprotected sex, blood contact, bites, and from mother to baby at birth.	Lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, abdominal pain and/or yellowing of the skin (jaundice). May be asymptomatic.	From weeks before onset to months or years after recovery from acute illness. May be infectious for life.	No exclusion required.	Report to Health Unit. Immediately report any bites that cause bleeding. Hepatitis B vaccine and/or immune globulin may be indicated for close contacts under special circumstances.
<i>Measles (Red Measles)</i>	Virus in respiratory secretions. Spreads person to person through the air or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions. Highly infectious. Incubation period 7-18 days.	Fever, cough, runny nose, inflamed eyes, followed by rash. Rash is characterized by large red spots which often join together, starts on face and spreads rapidly over body.	From about 4 days before onset of rash until 4 days after onset of rash.	Exclude until at least 4 days after onset of rash.	Report to Health Unit at once. Immediate reporting is essential in limiting outbreaks of measles.
<i>Meningitis</i>	Spreads from person to person through direct contact with nose and throat secretions. Can be viral or bacterial. Incubation period is 1 – 10 days.	A severe headache, sudden onset of fever, vomiting, stiff neck and sensitivity to light. May develop a red pin-point rash. Can be life threatening infection. Asymptomatic carrier state exists in 5 –10% of the population.	For bacterial meningitis, communicable until 24 hours after the start of antibiotics.	For bacterial meningitis, exclude until 24 hours after the start of antibiotics. For viral meningitis, exclude until well enough to participate.	Report to Health Unit immediately. Seek emergency care immediately. In some circumstances, close contacts may require antibiotics or vaccine.
<i>Mumps</i>	Virus spreads person to person by droplets and through the air. Also spread by direct contact with the saliva of infected persons. Incubation period is usually 15-18 days.	Typically involves swelling of the salivary glands. The virus can also affect other parts of the body. About 1/3 of infections do not involve facial swelling, but instead show signs of respiratory infection.	From 7 days before to 9 days after onset of swelling. Most infectious 2 days before to 5 days after onset of swelling.	Exclude for 9 days after onset of swelling.	Report to Health Unit.
<i>Roseola (Sixth Disease)</i>	Spread of <i>human herpesvirus 6</i> is not clearly understood. Common in children 6-24 months of age. Incubation period is about 10 days.	Starts with fever. Several days later small red spots appear on face and body. Rash lasts 3-5 days. In some children, high fever may be the only symptom.	Unknown. If the virus becomes latent may be communicable for life. Difficult to diagnose until rash appears.	Do not exclude unless too ill to participate.	Not reportable to the Health Unit.
<i>Rubella (German Measles)</i>	Spreads from person to person when nose and mouth secretions from the ill person enter the nose, mouth or eyes of another person. There is risk of severe damage to the fetus if a pregnant woman gets rubella during the first half of the pregnancy. Incubation period 14-21 days.	Many children infected have no signs of illness or rash. May have mild fever, sore throat, swollen glands in neck and behind the ears, which is followed in 5-10 days by a rash. The rash starts on the face and becomes generalized in 24 hours. It lasts about 3 days.	7 days before until at least 4 days after onset of rash.	Exclude for 7 days after onset of rash.	Report to Health Unit. Susceptible pregnant staff should seek medical care promptly.

Sources:

- 1) American Academy of Pediatrics. (2006). Red Book 2006:Report of the committee on infectious diseases. (25th ed). American Academy of Pediatrics: Elk Grove Village, IL.
- 2) Heyman, D (2004). Control of Communicable Diseases Manual. (18th ed). American Public Health Association: Washington.

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