

## Childcare and Illness: Should Your Child Stay Home?

Sometimes it is hard to decide if your child is too ill to go to childcare. Usually, children should stay home if illness keeps them from enjoying the daily activities of childcare. Children should also stay home if caring for them keeps the child care provider from caring for other children or if it affects the health and safety of the other children.

The list below follows Ohio's child care rules from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

### Signs of illness

Keep your child out of childcare if he or she has any of the following signs:

- Seems very tired and needs bed rest (a common flu symptom)
- Throws up (vomits) more than 1 time
- Has 3 or more loose, watery, unformed stools (diarrhea) in 24 hours, not caused by a change in diet or medicine; especially if it runs out of the diaper or underwear
- Cough that interrupts normal play or sleep
- Shortness of breath or increased wheezing during normal activity
- Underarm temperature above 100°F, especially if there are other signs of illness
- Earache, headache, sore throat or recent injury that makes it hard to play or sleep normally
- White or yellow eye discharge with pink or red skin inside or around the eye or eyelid
- Rash with a fever or change in behavior
- Mouth sores and drooling, unless the doctor decides that the child is not contagious



**Picture 1** Your child should not go to childcare if his underarm temperature is **above 100°F**.

## Fever

Your child should not go to childcare if his underarm temperature is above 100°F. He may go back to school when it is below 100°F for at least 24 hours and he feels well enough to play as usual.

## Contagious disease

Germs are everywhere in the childcare setting. A contagious (catching) disease spreads by close contact with a sick person or contaminated object. **Many illnesses are contagious and can be spread 24 hours before your child shows signs of illness.** For this reason, keeping your child out of childcare may not always keep him from getting sick. Good hand-washing and disinfecting toys and surfaces are the best ways to stop the spread of illness.

Children are required to stay away from childcare if they have:

- Lice and scabies – no child care until after the first treatment
- Impetigo – no child care for 24 hours after treatment starts
- Strep throat or other strep infections – no child care until child has been taking antibiotics for 24 hours. Fever must be gone.
- Tuberculosis\*
- Chickenpox\*
- Pertussis – Whooping cough\*
- Hepatitis A\*
- Measles, mumps or rubella\*
- Shingles\*
- Salmonella, shigella, E. coli, Campylobacter, Giardia\*
- Neisseria Meningitis\*

\*These illnesses must be reported to the local Health Department. Your child's doctor will tell you when he or she may return to childcare.

If your child goes to daycare, at-home care, after school activities (at home or at a center), or any other care involving other children, please contact the caregiver to decide if your child can still take part. Even if your child is only seeing a caregiver, disease can be spread to other children through the caregiver.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's doctor or nurse.