

HEALTH GUIDELINES

This guideline includes information about the transmission of common infections.

Incubation Period: Time interval between exposure to the infection and onset of symptoms.

Contagious Period: Time interval during which a sick child's disease is contagious to others. With precautions, children sometimes can return to day care and school before this period is over.

- **Infections that are not Contagious:** Many common bacterial infections are not contagious (e.g., ear infections, sinus infections, bladder infections, kidney infections, and pneumonia). Sexually transmitted diseases are not contagious to children unless there is sexual contact or shared bathing.

A child *IS* considered contagious:

1. If they have a fever, and up to 24 hours thereafter

2. At the beginning stages of a cold while it is harsh and continuous, has discolored nasal drainage, is actively sneezing and sniffing, has weepy, watery eyes (any combination of these). Children spread viruses when they sneeze as it lands on toys, equipment and other children and can remain active for hours and in some cases, days.

A child *IS NOT* contagious if he/she has been on antibiotics for more than 24 hours.

DISEASE	INCUBATION PERIOD (DAYS)	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD (DAYS)
<i>Skin Infections/Rashes:</i>		
Chickenpox	14-16	2 days before rash until all sores have crusts (6-7 days)
Fifth disease (Erythema infectiosum)	10-14	7 days before rash until rash begins
Hand, foot, and mouth disease	3-6	Onset of mouth ulcers until fever gone
Impetigo (strep or staph)	2-5	Onset of sores until 24 hours on antibiotic
Lice	7	Onset of itch until 1 treatment
Measles	10-12	4 days before rash until rash gone (7 days)
Roseola	10-15	Onset of fever until rash gone (2 days)
Rubella (German measles)	14-21	7 days before rash until rash gone (4 days)
Scabies	30	Onset of rash until 1 treatment
Scarlet fever	3-6	Onset of fever or rash until 24 hours on antibiotic
Shingles (contagious for chicken pox)	14-16	Onset of rash until all sores have crusts (7 days) (Note: No need to isolate if sores can be kept covered.)
Warts	30-180	Minimally contagious
<i>Respiratory Infections:</i>		

Bronchiolitis	4-6	Onset of cough until 7 days
Colds	2-5	Onset of runny nose until fever gone
Cold sores (herpes)	2-12	Footnote 1
Coughs (viral) or croup (viral)	2-5	Onset of cough until fever gone
Diphtheria	2-5	Onset of sore throat until 4 days on antibiotic
Influenza	1-2	Onset of cough until fever gone
Sore throat, strep	2-5	Onset of sore throat until 24 hours on antibiotic
Sore throat, viral	2-5	Onset of sore throat until fever gone
Tuberculosis	14-70	Until 2 weeks on drugs (Note: Most childhood TB is not contagious.)
Whooping cough	7-10	Onset of runny nose until 5 days on antibiotic
<i>Intestinal Infections:</i>		
Diarrhea, bacterial	1-5	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, giardia	7-21	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, traveler's	1-6	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, viral (Rotavirus)	1-3	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Hepatitis A	14-50	2 weeks before jaundice begins until jaundice resolved (7 days)
Hepatitis B	50-180	2 weeks before jaundice begins until jaundice resolved (7 days)
Pinworms	21-28	Minimally contagious, staying home is unnecessary
Vomiting, viral	2-5	Until vomiting stops
<i>Other Infections:</i>		
Infectious mononucleosis	30-50	Onset of fever until fever gone (7 days)
Meningitis, bacterial	2-10	7 days before symptoms until 24 hours on IV antibiotics in hospital
Mumps	16-18	5 days before swelling until swelling gone (7 days)
Pinkeye without pus (viral)	1-5	Mild infection, staying home is unnecessary
Pinkeye with pus (bacterial)	2-7	Onset of pus until 1 day on antibiotic eyedrops

Footnotes:

1. **Cold sores:** Less than 6 years old, contagious until cold sores are dry, 4-5 days (no isolation if sores are on part of body that can be covered). More than 6 years old, no isolation necessary if beyond touching, picking stage.
2. **Diarrhea Precautions:** Contagious until stools are formed. Stay home until fever is gone, diarrhea is mild, blood and mucus are gone, and toilet-trained child has control over loose BMs. Shigella and E-coli 0157 require extra precautions.

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Reviewed 8/2005

Revised 7/2005

