

# Excluding Kids From Daycare & School: Separating Myth From Fact

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When is a child too sick to go to daycare, or to school? Does a kid's runny nose mean he should stay at home? How about wheezing, or rashes, or fevers?

Parents and day care providers and schools don't always agree on those decisions. But there are national guidelines, crafted by pediatricians and infectious disease experts. While these guidelines aren't law, they are meant to help separate myth from reality.

These conditions are NOT reasons to exclude your child from day care or school:

- ◆ Runny nose, **regardless of whether clear or discolored**, so long as no fever
  - ◆ Rashes, so long as the child is behaving normally without fever or itch
- ◆ "Pink Eye", more correctly known as Conjunctivitis, **without** purulent discharge (pus)
  - ◆ Sinus infections

The following conditions ARE reasons for temporary exclusion from day care or school:

- ◆ Child is too ill to comfortably participate in activities
- ◆ Child is too ill for day care staff to handle without compromising the health & safety of other children
  - ◆ Fever (defined as greater than 100.4 Fahrenheit)
    - ◆ Lethargy beyond expected tiredness
      - ◆ Uncontrolled coughing
    - ◆ Inexplicable irritability or persistent crying
      - ◆ Difficulty breathing
        - ◆ Wheezing
      - ◆ Profuse diarrhea
  - ◆ Blood in stools not explained by dietary changes, medication, or hard stools
    - ◆ Vomiting (2 or more episodes in the previous 24 hours)
  - ◆ Persistent abdominal pain continuing for more than 2 hours
    - ◆ Mouth sores with drooling
    - ◆ Rash with fever or behavior change
  - ◆ Pink eye/ Conjunctivitis with purulent discharge (pus)
    - ◆ Head Lice, until after the first treatment
    - ◆ Scabies, until after the first treatment
- ◆ Impetigo (a staph. or strep. skin infection) until child has been on medication for 24 hours
  - ◆ Chickenpox, until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- ◆ Whooping cough (pertussis), until 5 days of antibiotic treatment has been completed
  - ◆ Shingles (herpes zoster)
- ◆ Herpes Simplex (cold sores), until lesions crusted over
- ◆ Pneumonia, until no fever or difficulty breathing, and on treatment for at least 24 hours