

# TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL

No parent wants a child to miss school without good reason. But sending a sick kid to class can make a condition worse and put other children at risk.

The following guideline can help you make that tough morning call.

## **Don't keep a child home for:**

- Sniffles, a clear runny nose and a mild cough without a fever. It could be a common cold or an allergic response to dust, pollen, chalk, or seasonal changes.
- Vague complaints of aches, pains or fatigue.
- **An undiagnosed rash**, especially when there's a fever and behavioral change. Check with the doctor as soon as possible.
- **Purulent conjunctivitis (pinkeye)** in which there's a white or yellow discharge, often with matted eyelids after sleep, eye pain and redness. School can wait until eyes are clear or have been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours.

## **Keep a child home when he/she has:**

- **Any physical or emotional condition** that would prevent him/her from participating comfortably in class.
- **A fever of 100° or more.** Coupled with a rash, earache, sore throat, lethargy or nausea, fever may signal a highly contagious infection. Keep child home at least 24 hours after temperature has returned to normal without help from medication.
- **A persistent, productive cough and wheezing coupled with a thick or constant nasal discharge.** Call your pediatrician if the child is having trouble breathing, is dehydrated or is atypically weak or sleepy.
- **Vomiting or diarrhea** during the previous night.
- **Strep throat/scarlet fever.** Stay home until clinical recovery or after effective antibiotic therapy for 24-48 hours.
- **Head lice (pediculosis).** Stay home until treated and all nits are removed.
- **Scabies (body lice).** Stay home 24 hours after start of treatment.
- **Impetigo.** Stay home until skin is clear or 24 hours after start of treatment.
- **Chickenpox.** Stay home five days after the onset of blisters, or until all pox are scabbed over and dry.

**Sources:** American Academy of Pediatrics; Riverside County Department of Public Health; Children's Center of Riverside; Dr. Alan Kwasman.