



# DISEASE PREVENTION

## FAQ: When to Stay Home from School or Child Care

### What are infectious diseases?

Infectious diseases spread through the air, through food, by touch or bodily fluids.

There are many types of infectious diseases that cause:

- Respiratory Illnesses
- Stomach-Related Illnesses
- Skin & Eye Infections

Some illnesses have mild symptoms, others may be more severe. For health of other children, staff, and families within your community, it is important to take appropriate actions to control the spread of these diseases.

### Basic health practices that prevent the spread of infectious diseases



#### Stay Home When Sick

Getting rest and fluids will help your child recover. Stay home to prevent the spread of diseases.



#### Frequent Handwashing

Wash hands for 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, changing diapers, and before preparing food or eating.



#### Cover Your Cough & Sneeze

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow. Consider wearing a mask if you have respiratory illness symptoms.



#### Childhood Immunizations

Immunizations have eliminated or greatly reduced many childhood diseases. Unsure if your child is up-to-date or have questions? You can call WCPH for help.



## When does my child need to stay home from school or child care?

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Here are a few guidelines to help you make the best decision for the health and safety of your child and those around them. Stay home and consider contacting your healthcare provider if your child is experiencing any of the following:

- Fever (temperature over 100.4° F)
- Unidentified or spreading rash
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Mouth or skin sores that are weeping fluid
- Persistent coughing
- Extreme fatigue or lethargy
- Sore throat with difficulty swallowing
- Severe pain or severe headache

Continue to monitor your child's symptoms and call 911 for any illness that is life-threatening or needs to be treated right away.

## When can my child return to school or child care?

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Before returning to school, children need to be both:

- free from fever, diarrhea and vomiting for at least 24 hours (without the use of medication)
- showing significant improvement in symptoms with a return to normal activity level.

There are some notifiable conditions that require additional measures before returning to school, which may include negative test results, antibiotics, other treatments, or isolation periods. You can view a full list of Washington State's Notifiable Conditions by visiting [whitmancountypublichealth.org](http://whitmancountypublichealth.org) under our Community Health division.

During outbreaks of communicable diseases, there may be further steps to control the spread of illness in school and child care settings. (WAC 246-110)

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