

Advice on childhood illnesses

Updated August 2018



Go to school if feeling well enough
Get treatment if necessary

It could be catching
Possible restrictions on going to school

Don't go to school
Contact a healthcare professional

What is it?	What does it look like?	Should you go to school	Where to get treatment	Additional advice
Chicken pox (varicella)	A rash starts as small, red, flat spots that develop into itchy fluid filled blisters		Pharmacy	Back to school five days after the rash appears
Common cold	Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat		Pharmacy	Ensure good hand hygiene
Conjunctivitis	Tearry, red, itchy, painful eye(s)		Pharmacy	Try not to touch the eye(s) to avoid it spreading
Flu	Fever, cough, sneezing, runny nose, headache, body aches and pain, exhaustion, sore throat		Pharmacy	Ensure children who are eligible get their seasonal flu immunisation Ensure good hand hygiene
German measles (rubella)	Fever, tiredness with a raised, red rash that starts on the face and spreads downwards		GP	Ensure children are vaccinated Back to school four days after the rash appears
Glandular fever	High temperature, sore throat, swollen glands		GP	Your child needs to be physically able to concentrate
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Fever, sore throat, headache, small painful blisters inside the mouth, on the tongue and gums (they may appear on hands and feet)		GP	Your child only needs to stay off school if they feel too ill to go
Head lice	Itchy scalp (may be worse at night)		Pharmacy	
Impetigo	Clusters of red bumps or blisters surrounded by areas of redness		GP	Back to school when the lesions crust over or 48 hours after starting antibiotics

Measles	Fever, cough, runny nose, watery inflamed eyes, small red spots with white or bluish white centres in the mouth, red and blotchy rash		GP	Ensure children are vaccinated Back to school four days after the rash appears
Ringworm	Red ring shaped rash, may be itchy, dry and scaly or wet and crusty		GP	
Scabies	Pimple like rash and intense itching, which may be all over the body but commonly between the fingers and on wrists, elbows, arms		GP	Back to school after the first treatment
Shingles	Blister type rash with pain, itching or tingling along the affected nerve pathway		GP	Only keep your child off school if the rash is weeping and cannot be covered
Sickness bug / diarrhoea	Stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea which is caused by a virus such as norovirus, as opposed to a pre-existing condition like IBS or a side effect of taking medication		Pharmacy	Back to school after 48 hours from the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhoea
Threadworms	Intense itchiness around anus		Pharmacy	See your GP if the symptoms persist after 48 hours
Tonsilitis	Intense sore throat		Pharmacy /GP	See your GP if a high temperature lasts more than 48 hours or your child can't swallow Ensure good hand hygiene
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Violent and consistent coughing until the child inhales with a "whooping" sound to get air into their lungs		GP	Back to school after taking antibiotics for five days or 21 days from when the illness started

If you need any additional help or advice, visit www.nhs.uk.

Please note: This information is a guide only, based on Public Health England guidance, and whilst it's been approved by health professionals, if you're unsure about your child's wellbeing, please contact your pharmacy or GP to double-check.

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