

# SCHOOL NURSE

## SICK DAY GUIDELINES MAKING THE RIGHT CALL WHEN YOUR CHILD IS ILL

### Should I keep my child home or send him or her to school?

You should keep your child home if he or she:

- Has a fever of 100. degrees or higher
- Has been vomiting
- Has symptoms that prevent him or her from participating in school, such as:
  - Excessive tiredness or lack of appetite
  - Productive coughing, sneezing
  - Headache, body aches, earache
  - Severe sore throat \*

*\* (A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be a strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your pediatrician as your child needs a throat culture to determine if it is strep)*

**Keep your child home until his or her fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication.** Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and expose others unnecessarily to illness.

### Does my child have the flu?

Signs of flu symptoms, which typically **come on suddenly**, include:

- High fever
- Chills
- Headache, body aches, earaches
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dry cough

*If you are unsure about the best way to treat your child's cold or flu, call your pediatrician.*

### How do I make my child feel better?

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Encourage fluids, like water, soup, juice and ice
- Help your child relax by reading him a story and giving him plenty of TLC
- Consider using a cool humidifier

## **How can I prevent my child from getting a cold?**

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper hand washing should take about 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice. Use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available
- Teach your child to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve
- Keep the child’s environment tobacco free
- Try to minimize the time your child spends with other children who have a cough or cold symptoms
- Keep an annual well-child exam to follow changes in your child’s health
- Keep all of your child’s immunizations up-to-date (The Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines now recommend a flu vaccine for most children aged 6 months up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. Giving a daily vitamin may be recommended by your pediatrician
- After your child is feeling better, clean all surfaces; wash the bedding and air out the room
- Keep surfaces like door knobs, phones, remote controls, toys and keyboards clean
- Consult your doctor if you have any questions