

Common Childhood Communicable Diseases




These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on control on Communicable Diseases. Diagnosis should be made by a physician or nurse practitioner.
Any child who is too ill to participate fully in regular activities should stay home from school or daycare.

Last revised: September 2011

Disease	Signs and Symptoms	How it is spread	Contagious Period	Exclusion guidelines and reporting	What can be done
Chickenpox (Varicella) Incubation period: 2-3 weeks	Fever and skin rash that comes in crops. Rash begins on chest, back, underarm, neck and face: changes to blisters for 5-6 days then scabs.	Virus spreads very easily through the air or through direct contact with fluid in a chickenpox blister.	Usually 1-2 days before onset of rash and continuing until all lesions are crusted (usually about 5 days).	For mild cases (low fever for a short period of time and only a little rash, less than 30 spots): child can go to school as long as they feel well enough to participate in normal activities. Siblings may attend school. Report to Health Unit	Thorough hand washing by staff and children. Vaccine available. Pregnant women who have been exposed and have NOT had chicken pox should call their health care provider.
Common Colds Incubation period: varies depending on the virus	Runny nose, sneezing, cough, sore throat, tiredness, headache, loss of appetite.	Direct and indirect contact with respiratory tract secretions of an infected person.	Varies depending on the virus.	Child may go to school if he feels well enough to take part in the activities.	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.
Diarrhea Incubation period varies: Campylobacter: 1-10 days E. coli: 3-8 days Salmonellosis: 6-72 hours Shigellosis: 1-3 days Giardiasis: 3-25 days	Diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, cramps, fever, loss of appetite and blood and/or mucus in bowel movement.	Ingestion of contaminated food or water; also spread from person to person on contaminated hands or objects.	Varies depending on which bacteria are found in the stool. Usually while symptoms persist. Carriers without symptoms may transmit disease.	Until stool returns to normal and symptoms gone. Negative stool cultures are not required unless an outbreak occurs. <u>Shigella</u> requires 2 successive negative stool cultures, 24 hours apart and at least 24 hours after cessation of symptoms. Report to Health Unit	Thorough hand washing is extremely important in reducing the spread, especially after toilet use.


 Report Immediately

 Report within one business day

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Fifth's Disease (Parvovirus B19) Incubation period: 4-20 days	Rash begins on the cheeks, 'slapped cheek appearance', followed in 1-4 days by a lace-like rash on the trunk and extremities which fades, but may reoccur for 1-3 weeks on exposure to sunlight or heat.	Virus spreads from person to person through contact with respiratory secretions of an infected person.	Greatest before onset of rash and probably not communicable after onset of rash.	No exclusion necessary. Report to Health Unit	Exposure causes concern for women in the first half of pregnancy. Pregnant women who have been exposed should call their health care provider. Thorough hand washing is important to prevent the spread of infection.
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease Incubation period: 3-5 days	Usually includes fever, loss of appetite, sore throat, malaise, painful sores in mouth, rash with or without blisters on hands, feet and diaper area.	Virus spreads from person to person through direct contact with nose and throat discharges and feces of infected people; or via contaminated hands, objects and surfaces.	The virus can live in stool for 4 weeks after the start of illness.	No exclusion is necessary unless child does not feel well. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.
Hepatitis A Incubation period: 28-30 days	Onset is usually sudden with loss of appetite, nausea, tiredness, fever and stomach ache. Tea coloured urine, light coloured stools and jaundice (yellowing of eyes or skin) may appear. Symptoms are generally absent or much milder in children than in adults.	Virus is excreted in stool of infected persons. Spread person to person; it may also be spread in contaminated food or water.	From 2 weeks before until 1 week after the onset of jaundice. Note: many have no symptoms, but are capable of passing the virus on to others.	Until 1 week after the onset of symptoms. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough hand washing by staff and children. Vaccine available.


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Hepatitis B Incubation period: average 2-3 months	Loss of appetite, fatigue, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and rash. Jaundice (yellowing of eyes or skin) may be present in adults, but often absent in young children. Symptoms vary from none at all to severe.	Virus is found in blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Can be spread by unprotected sex, blood contact, bites and from mother to baby at birth.	During acute stages of illness and perhaps longer as virus persists in stool for several weeks.	No exclusion is necessary unless the child exhibits biting behaviour or has open sores that cannot be covered. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Refer to "Guidelines for cleaning blood and body fluids" in section 6. Health Unit staff will determine if Hepatitis B vaccine and/or immune globulin is required for close contacts.
Impetigo Incubation period: 1-10 days	A skin rash that is characterized by clusters of blisters or red bumps. The blisters may ooze or be covered with honey-coloured crust. The rash usually appears around the nose, mouth and parts of the skin not covered by clothes.	Spread from person to person by direct contact with open sores of people who carry the bacteria without symptoms. Can also be spread by indirect contact.	From onset of skin rash until 24 hours after treatment with oral or topical antibiotic. Very contagious and should be treated at once.	Exclude until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Do not share clothing or linens.
Influenza Incubation period: 1-3 days	Fever, headache, fatigue, muscle soreness, runny nose, and sore throat and cough. Often children may have vomiting and diarrhea.	Virus is spread from person to person through respiratory secretions (coughing or sneezing) or by indirect contact with these secretions (e.g., on objects, doors, phones)	24 hours before onset of symptoms and infectious 3-7 days afterwards.	Encourage individuals with influenza-like symptoms to stay home. Generally, exclude until well enough to participate in activities. Usually 5-7 days. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Vaccine available from October to April.

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Lice Incubation period for eggs: 1-2 weeks	Itching of the scalp. Look for: 1) crawling lice in the hair 2) eggs (nits) glued to the hair near the scalp 3) scratch marks on the scalp or back of the neck or hair line.	Person to person contact with an infected person or their belongings.	While lice remain alive on the infected person or his clothing.	Refer to “Head Lice Policy” in Section 3. Exclusion guidelines vary with school boards.	Launder contaminated clothes and bedding. Parents are responsible for treatment and regular head checks. Refer to “Head Lice Policy” in section 3.
Measles (Rubeola) Incubation period: 7-18 days	Fever, watery eyes, runny nose and cough prior to a red blotchy rash appearing on the 3 rd to 7 th day. Rash usually begins on the face, spreads down to the trunk and out the extremities and last 4-7 days.	Virus in respiratory secretions. Spread person to person through air. Very infectious.	4 days before the rash appears to 4 days after the onset of rash.	Exclude until 4 days after the appearance of the rash. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Health Unit staff will determine which students are at risk for measles and exclude them from school until the risk period is over. Unimmunized children may need measles vaccine or immune globulin.


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Meningitis (bacterial) Incubation period: 2-10 days	Symptoms may include all or one or any combination of: fever, stiff neck, headache, vomiting, unusual sleepiness, irritability, lack of appetite; sometimes rash or seizures.	Contact with respiratory tract secretions of an infected person.	Until 24 hours after starting effective antibiotic treatment.	Exclude until child has been treated and is well enough to participate in normal daily activities. Report to Health Unit	Other children (especially infants) should be watched for signs of illness, especially fever. Parents of children at risk will be notified by the Health Unit. Health Unit staff will advise those at risk of need of antibiotics and/or vaccination.
Meningitis (viral) Incubation varies	May experience some or all of the following: sudden fever, severe headache, nausea, vomiting, stiff neck, eyes sensitive to light, insomnia and/or personality changes.	Varies with each virus.	Varies with each virus.	Exclude until child is well enough to participate in school activities. Report to Health Unit	Nothing.
Mononucleosis Incubation period: 4-6 weeks	Fever, sore throat, swollen glands, fatigue.	Virus spreads through contact with saliva of an infected person or articles soiled with saliva. Kissing facilitates spread among young adults.	Undetermined - virus excretion can occur for many months after infection.	Not required.	Nothing.

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Mumps Incubation period: average 16-18 days	Fever, swollen, tender glands on one or both sides of the face. Symptoms are sometimes so mild that disease is not recognized.	Virus is spread by direct and indirect contact with respiratory droplets from the nose and mouth.	From 7 days before swelling appears until 9 days after.	Exclude until 9 days after onset of swelling. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Health Unit staff will determine which children are at risk for mumps and exclude them from school until infectious period is over. Unimmunized children may need mumps vaccine.
Pink-eye Conjunctivitis Incubation period for bacterial: 1-3 days	Red, watery, itching, burning eyes; swollen eyelids, sensitivity to light. A discharge may cause eyelids to crust over and stick together during the night.	Contact with discharge from the eye or respiratory tract of an infected person.	During the course of active infection. May be highly infectious depending on cause.	Exclude only if discharge is yellow, thick pus and then until the antibiotic has been taken for 1 full day.	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.


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Disease	Signs and Symptoms	How it is spread	Contagious Period	Exclusion guidelines and reporting	What can be done
<p>Ringworm</p> <p>Incubation period</p> <p><i>Body:</i> 4-10 days</p> <p><i>Scalp:</i> 10-14 days</p>	<p><i>Body:</i> Rash that may have a ring shape and raised edge. Edge of the lesion may be dry, itchy and scaly or moist and crusty. As lesions spread outward, the centre often becomes clear.</p> <p><i>Scalp:</i> May be difficult to detect in early stages, Begins as a small, scaly patch which spreads leaving scaly patches of temporary baldness.</p>	Direct contact with infected person, animal or contaminated articles.	As long as lesions are present and viable fungus persists on contaminated materials.	<p><i>Body:</i> Exclude until treatment has been started. No gym or swimming until it clears.</p> <p><i>Scalp:</i> Exclude until 24 hours after treatment has been started.</p>	<p>Launder soiled clothes, towels, and bedding in hot water. Clean and disinfect environment surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.</p> <p>The infected child is not to participate in activities which would expose others directly to lesions such as swimming, sharing of clothing, linens, combs or brushes.</p>
<p>Rosella (Examthem subitum)</p> <p>Incubation period: 5-15 days, usually about 10 days</p>	<p>Sudden high fever which lasts 3-5 days. The fever disappears and a rash appears mainly on the child's face and body. The rash consists of small red spots which last a day or two. Affects children between the ages of 3 months to 4 years of age.</p>	The virus is spread when you come in contact with saliva of an infected person, e.g., coughing and sneezing.	The child is infectious while symptoms are present.	No exclusion necessary.	Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.


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Rubella (German Measles) Incubation period: 2-3 weeks	May have mild fever and cold symptoms, widespread rash. Swelling of the lymph glands behind the ears.	Virus spreads through contact with the respiratory tract secretions of an infected person.	From 1 week before to at least 4 days after onset of rash.	Exclude 7 days after onset of the rash. Report to Health Unit	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. <i>Pregnant women who have been exposed should call their health care provider.</i>
Scabies Incubation period: 2-6 weeks	Very itchy rash. Usually appears on the fingers, elbows, armpits and abdomen.	Parasites spread by direct contact with infected person or articles immediately contaminated beforehand.	Until mites and eggs are destroyed by treatment. A second treatment one week after the first course is often needed.	Exclude until 24 hours after treatment begins. Report to Health Unit	Launder soiled clothes and bedding. Other children and staff may need treatment.
Strep Throat (Streptococcal Sore Throat) Incubation period: 2-5 days Scarlet Fever Incubation period: 1-3 days	Strep Throat: Fever, sore throat, swollen glands and headache. Scarlet Fever: May include above symptoms plus a very fine raised rash. Appears most often on the neck, chest, in folds of armpit, elbow, groin and inner thigh. A swollen, red tongue may appear. Later there may be peeling of skin on fingertips and toes.	Contact with respiratory tract secretions of an infected person.	If untreated can infect others up to 10-21 days. If treated with antibiotics, will not be infectious after 24-48 hours.	Until at least a full 24 hours of antibiotics begins and child is without fever for 24 hours.	Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children.


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<p>Whooping Cough (Pertussis)</p> <p>Incubation period: usually 7-10 days, can range from 5-21 days.</p>	<p>Initial signs are coughing and sneezing followed 1-2 weeks later by breathing characterized by a series of short convulsive-like coughs and high pitched gasp of air called a whoop. Coughs are sometimes followed by vomiting. Symptoms can last 1-2 months.</p>	<p>Bacteria in respiratory secretions. Spread from person to person through the air. Very infectious.</p>	<p>Very infectious in the early stages. Little risk 3 weeks after onset of cough even if it persists. If treated with erythromycin, no longer contagious after 5 days of therapy.</p> <p>Note: Pertussis is among the most contagious of diseases.</p>	<p>Until 5 days after treatment with erythromycin begins and feeling well, otherwise 3 weeks from date of onset.</p> <p>Report to Health Unit</p>	<p>Clean and disinfect soiled articles and surfaces. Thorough and frequent hand washing by staff and children. Health Unit staff will determine which students are at risk for pertussis and exclude them from school until the infectious period is over. Contacts may require a booster vaccine and/or antibiotics.</p>

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Website Resources

Porcupine Health Unit, www.porcupinehu.on.ca

Health Canada, www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Centre for Disease Control (American), www.cdc.gov

Canadian Paediatric Society, www.cps.ca

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, www.health.gov.on.ca

WHO-World Health Organization, www.who.int

List of references

Canadian Food Inspection Agency, www.inspection.gc.ca

Canadian Paediatric Society, *Managing Infections*, www.cps.ca

Canadian Paediatric Society, *Caring for Kids*, <http://www.caringforkids.ca/index.htm>

Committee on Infectious Disease (2009). *Red Book: 2009 Report of the Committee on Infectious Disease*, American Academy of Paediatrics: Elk Grove Village, IL.

Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Heymann, David (2008). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual*, American Public Health Association : Washington, DC.

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, www.health.gov.on.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada, <http://dsol-smed.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

PubMed Health, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/>

World Health Organization, www.who.int



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