

PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...?

Manitoba Health provides the schools with the protocols schools are to follow when students or staff become ill. From time-to-time these protocols change so you might be surprised to learn the following:

Chicken Pox: There is no longer a school-exclusion period for chicken pox. If the child is uncomfortable, feeling sick or is embarrassed to come to school because of the blisters, parents may decide to keep the child at home; however, there is no medical reason to keep children out of school when they have chicken pox.

Pink Eye: Pink eye is highly contagious until eye has been treated with antibiotic eye drops or ointment for a minimum of one day AND the eye is improving. Some symptoms may last for several more days, but after treatment starts to take effect, the child is free to return to school. Of course, if there is a lot of discomfort, it is best to wait another day or two.

Influenza: The Flu doesn't seem like such a big deal – people get the flu all the time; however, in a school or day-care situation, influenza can spread very quickly and, in some people, cause complications of other conditions – such as asthma. The recommendation from Manitoba Health is to exclude from school or day care until completely well. Here are some guidelines for distinguishing between a cold and the flu from chealth.canoe.ca : Note that influenza is not a stomach “flu” so vomiting and diarrhea are not symptoms.

| Symptom | Flu | Cold |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Fever | Usually present, high (102°F to 104°F or 38°C to 41°C); lasts 3 to 4 days | Uncommon |
| Headache | Very common (can be severe) | Uncommon |
| Aches and pains | Common and often severe | Slight |
| Fatigue and weakness | Starts early, can be severe, and can last up to 14 to 21 days | Mild |
| Extreme exhaustion | Very common at the start | Never |
| Stuffy nose | Sometimes | Common |
| Sneezing | Sometimes | Common |
| Sore throat | Sometimes | Common |
| Chest discomfort, cough | Common | Mild to moderate, hacking cough |
| Complications | Can lead to pneumonia or respiratory failure; can worsen a current chronic condition; can be life-threatening | Can lead to sinus congestion or earache |

Head Lice: This one will likely be a bit of surprise to most people. The protocol around dealing with head lice has changed. While we used to have to send home anyone who had nits in his/her hair until all nits were removed, we now can welcome back a student right after treatment with an effective product (requires using an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication) The child does not need to wait 24 hours before returning to school, nor is it necessary that all nits be removed after treatment . The school no longer checks for lice or nits but we will, however, still notify parents of students who are in the same class or on the same bus as someone found to have head lice. Lice can happen to anyone, so you will want to check your child to see if treatment is needed for your family.