

## *Tips from the School Health Office*



### WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send a child to school when he or she wakes up with early symptoms of an illness or complaints of not feeling well. It is best to keep your child home for a day to rest in some situations. The following are a few such situations that warrant keeping your child home and possibly conferring with your health care provider:

- Fever greater than, or equal to 100° orally, including a fever that requires control with medication, like Tylenol
- Child is too sleepy or doesn't feel well enough for a school day
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Significant cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class
- Sore throat that is severe, accompanied by fever and/or feeling ill, that persists longer than 48 hours, OR after known exposure to a confirmed case of Streptococcal throat infection
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose or mouth or rash on other body parts that might be impetigo; OR a rash in various stages including boils, sores and bumps that may be chicken pox; OR a significant rash accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever
- Red, runny eyes that distract the child from learning
- Large amount of discolored nasal discharge, especially if accompanied by facial pain or headache
- Severe ear pain or drainage from the ear
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever
- Any condition that you think may be serious or contagious to others.



**WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON, Continued**

Finally, if you know your child is still running a fever, it is not a good idea simply to give them Tylenol and send them to school because as soon as the medicine wears off, you are apt to get the dreaded call from the school nurse to leave work and come to pick up your feverish child. It is better to let them stay home in bed with a fever and take their medications at home until they are off all medicines and ready to learn for a full day in a classroom.

Remember, whenever you keep your child home from school, please call the attendance office in advance of the start of the school day and leave a message that your child will be absent.

To stop or cut down on the spread of illness, remind and show your children how to promptly discard used tissues, not to share personal items, to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, to keep their hands away from their face, and to wash hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water. Suggest that they silently sing the Happy Birthday song twice while washing their hands.