

9 MOST COMMON KID ILLNESSES

Our medical adviser **DINA KULIK** is an emergency room doc who's seen it all. Here's her cheat sheet for beating the bugs.



	AGE GROUP	COMMON SYMPTOMS	TOO SICK FOR DAYCARE/SCHOOL?	HOW LONG IT LASTS	HOW TO TREAT IT	WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOC
1. COMMON COLD	Any age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny nose • Congestion • Sneezing • Sore throat • Coughing 	If no fever and feeling well, send to daycare/school.	3-7 days	Fluids, rest and time	Stay out of that waiting room unless symptoms persist or worsen.
2. ROSEOLA	6-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Sore throat • Fever • Small red spots (on the trunk, face, neck and limbs) that blossom four or five days after onset of above symptoms once fever disappears 	The infection is likely most contagious during the fever phase, before the rash breaks out. And you usually can't send kids to daycare with a fever anyway.	The rash can take up to a week to fade, but once it appears your kid is no longer contagious.	Acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever-related discomfort. Time is the only cure—once the rash hits, the worst is over.	If your child's temperature reaches 39C (102F) and does not respond to medication.
3. FIFTH DISEASE	4-8 years	Lacy red rash accompanied by low-grade fever. Rash usually first appears on the face in a "slapped cheek" pattern, before spreading to the trunk and limbs.	This virus is passed along in a similar way to the common cold and is only contagious before the rash appears.	The rash lingers for 10 days, but it's no longer considered contagious after it emerges.	Symptoms are typically mild and don't require treatment, though some kids suffer from sore joints, which can be treated with a pain reliever.	Alert your doctor if your child has a chronic condition or blood abnormalities. See your doctor if you're exposed in pregnancy.
4. GASTRO-ENTERITIS (STOMACH FLU)	Any age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vomiting • Diarrhea or loose stools • Fever 	Kids can return to daycare/school once 24 hours have passed since vomiting. Diarrhea should be OK as long as it's "contained"—in a diaper or your kid can make it to the toilet.	From a couple of days to more than a week. Once kids are feeling better, they're likely not contagious.	If you're breastfeeding, keep it up. Also offer frequent sips of water or diluted juice.	Don't take a puking kid to the doctor unless he's showing signs of dehydration.
5. FLU (INFLUENZA)	Any age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High temperature (over 39.5C/103.1F) • Extreme tiredness • Sore throat • Cough • Headache and body aches • Nausea • Vomiting • Diarrhea 	Send kids to school once fever-free for 24 hours.	Fever 2-4 days; may take up to two weeks to recover. You're considered contagious up to seven days after getting sick.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever • Rest • Fluids for vomiting and/or diarrhea 	See a doctor immediately if your child experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fast/laboured breathing • bluish lips and/or skin • extreme drowsiness • severe crankiness • dehydration • blue or purple rash



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6. STREP THROAT	5-15 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Sore throat • Tonsils/throat are red, swollen, with white patches • Inflamed taste buds • Loss of appetite/nausea • Rash • Muscle aches/joint pain • Headache/congestion 	Your child is contagious as long as symptoms are present. After 24 hours on antibiotics they are no longer considered contagious.	With antibiotics, most kids are much better within 1 to 2 days.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics • Ibuprofen or acetaminophen for fever and sore throat pain • Avoid acidic foods and beverages 	If you suspect strep or your kid has been in close contact with a child who has it, see your doctor to avoid potentially serious complications.
7. PINK EYE (CONJUNCTIVITIS)	Usually 1-5 years	<p>VIRAL (most common, usually follows a cold)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One/both eyes are watery, itchy, light-sensitive <p>BACTERIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One/both eyes are red, swollen and have thick, sticky yellow or greenish-yellow discharge <p>ALLERGIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal allergies can cause allergic pink eye, usually in both eyes 	Viral/bacterial pink eye are highly contagious, so keep your kid home for the first 24 to 48 hours. As long as there is discharge, your kid is contagious. Allergic pink eye is not contagious.	Viral and bacterial pink eye may last for a few days up to two weeks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat viral pink eye at home. Use a damp, warm washcloth to ease irritation. • Bacterial pink eye requires drops—see your doctor for a prescription. • Treat allergic pink eye with allergy eye drops or see your doctor. 	See your doctor if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You're unsure of what type of pink eye your kid has, and to get antibiotics. • The eyelid becomes swollen or your child complains of pain or vision problems.
8. HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH	Any age (best known as "daycare disease")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-grade fever • Headache • Sore throat • Sores in the mouth, palate and/or tonsils • Lack of appetite • Spotty rash • Blisters on hands, feet and/or bum 	Keep kids home for the first three days. It's most contagious during the fever-headache-sore throat phase. Send well kids back to daycare even if rash hasn't yet healed.	Up to a week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch for dehydration, since kids with mouth sores tend to avoid food and drink. • Acetaminophen for pain and fever 	See your doctor to rule out infections like impetigo or chicken pox.
9. CROUP	Usually 0-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barking, seal-like cough, most common at night • Hoarse speech 	You may have to keep your child home for 2 to 5 days.	2-5 days	Warm, moist air to relax airway—sit together in a steamy bathroom for 10 min or run a humidifier. A blast of cold air can sometimes help, too. Steroid meds may help in moderate to severe cases.	Seek medical help if your child becomes worse or has difficulty breathing. Head to the ER or call 911 at any sign of bluish tongue or lips, or respiratory distress.

