

### **Winter Health Tips**

It is the time of year when colds, flu and stomach viruses seem to quickly spread. Sometimes it is difficult to know when to keep your child home. Here are some general guidelines to follow when deciding if your child should go to school.

- Your child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Your child should have had no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.
- If your child is unusually tired and is too sick to take part in classroom activities, they should stay home and rest.
- If your child has a sore throat, fever and swollen glands they should stay home from school.
- A cough that is bad enough to make your child turn blue or red in the face or a cough that is followed by a whooping sounds suggests a call to your doctor is needed and the child should not be at school.
- Ear pain or discharge from the ear requires advice from the child's doctor.
- Persistent green or yellow nasal drainage also suggests the need to consult your child's doctor.
- Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye or pink eye is a reason to keep your child home.

In addition to keeping your child home when they are sick, there are some things you can do to help prevent the spread of infections.

- Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of disease. Teach your child to wash their hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Hand washing should take about 20 seconds.
- Teach your child to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve. Tissues should be thrown in the trash immediately and hands should be washed as soon as possible. If unable to wash, hand sanitizer may be used.
- Clean surfaces that may be contaminated with germs including doorknobs, phones, remote controls, toys and keyboards.
- It is not too late to get a flu vaccine. Consult your doctor or pharmacist today.