

When a child should be excluded from a child care program?

Parents should be informed to seek alternate child care or keep their child at home if the child is not well enough to participate in the regular activities of the program, the illness requires greater care from the child care staff than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program, or their child has received one or more of the following diagnoses from a physician or other health professional:

- Chickenpox (the child can be permitted to return to the program when he or she feels well enough to participate in all activities, regardless of the state of the rash and as long as the child returns to the same group they were with one to two days before the onset of the rash);
- Diarrhea or loose stool (the child should be excluded for 24 hours until symptoms are resolved or assessed by a physician);
- Hepatitis A (the child should be excluded until 14 days after onset of illness or seven days after onset of jaundice);
- Impetigo (the child should be excluded until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated);
- Wheezing/Persistent Coughing; (the child should be excluded until assessed by a physician or the symptoms are resolved);
- Measles (the child should be excluded until four days after the appearance of a rash);
- Mouth sores with drooling (the child should be excluded until a physician has determined that the symptoms are non-infectious);
- Mumps (the child should be excluded until nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling);
- Pertussis, or "Whooping Cough" (the child should be excluded until five days after antibiotic treatment has been completed, until three weeks after onset of symptoms, or until the coughing has stopped);
- Purulent conjunctivitis, or "Red/Pink Eye" (the child should be excluded until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has been initiated);
- Rash, with fever or behavioural change (the child should be excluded until a physician has determined that the symptoms are non-infectious);
- Rubella (the child should be excluded until at least four days after onset of the rash, or up to five to seven days at the option of local health authority);
- Scabies, Head Lice, or other Infestation (the child should be excluded until appropriate treatment has been completed);
- Strep throat or other Streptococcal Infection (the child should be excluded until 24 hours after appropriate antibiotic treatment and cessation of the fever);
- Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness, such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing (the child should be excluded until assessed by a physician or the symptoms are resolved);
- Temperature, with a fever of 38.0 degrees C or higher;
- Tuberculosis (the child should be excluded until a physician has approved his or her return); or
- Vomiting – with two or more episodes of vomiting in the last 24 hours.

Respond

What to do if a child becomes ill

The Child Care Licensing Regulation (AR 143/2008) sections 8 (1) and (2) states that if a child exhibits the signs and symptoms of illness, the licence holder or provider must ensure that:

- The child's parent(s) arrange for the immediate removal of the child from the program premises; and
- A child may return to a program if the licence holder/provider is satisfied that the child does not pose a health risk to other children or caregivers. A parent may provide to the licence holder/provider a physician note or a parent can report to the licence holder/provider that the child has been symptom-free for a period of not less than 24 hours.

Respond

Signs or symptoms of illness exhibited by a child can include:

- Vomiting, fever, diarrhea, or a new, unexplained rash or cough;
- Requiring greater care and attention than can be provided without compromising the care of the other children in the program; or
- Having or displaying any other illness or symptom the staff member knows (or believes) may indicate that the child poses a health risk to persons on the program premises.

Note: See Appendix A for more information on fevers and febrile seizures.

Health and safety policies must state that in the case of illness, child care professionals and family day home providers will:

- Notify the parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact as soon as possible;
- Keep the child comfortable;
- Ensure the sick child is kept as far away from other children as is practical;
- Obtain medical assistance when necessary; and
- Notify the contract manager or agency immediately if the child's illness requires the licence holder or provider to request emergency health care and/or requires the child to remain in the hospital overnight.

Approved family day home providers are required under Family Day Home Standard 10D to notify the family day home agency within 24 hours if the provider, someone who resides in the family day home residence, or children participating in the family day home services, come into contact with a communicable disease as listed in Schedule 1 to the Communicable Disease Regulation (AR 238/85).

- If two or more children in a child care program have influenza-like symptoms, such as a sudden high fever, dry cough, headache, muscle ache and feeling very weak and tired, that started within 48 hours of each other, it is considered to be a potential "outbreak" in the program. All outbreaks, including an outbreak of any of the communicable diseases, must be reported by the child care program to the local Alberta Health Services public health office. Once a report has been made, Alberta Health Services will provide assistance in assessing and preventing further illness in the child care program.

Individual instances of common cold and gastroenteritis or "stomach illnesses" are not reportable unless an outbreak is suspected. Visit the Alberta Health Services website, www.albertahealthservices.ca, to find additional information on flu prevention in child care programs, or call:

Health Link Alberta Toll free: 1-866-408-LINK (5465)
Edmonton: 780-408-5465
Calgary: 403-943-5465