

# Infection Exposure Questions - Contagiousness

- This topic includes information about transmission of common infections. How long to stay out of school or child care is covered.
- **Incubation Period.** Time it takes to start having symptoms after contact with infection.
- **Contagious Period.** Time during which a sick child's disease can spread to others. Sometimes, children can return to school before this period is over.
- **Infections that cannot be spread to others.** Many common bacterial infections are not spread to others. Examples are ear, sinus, bladder, or kidney infections. Pneumonia also cannot be passed to others. Sexually transmitted diseases are usually not spread to children. But, they can be spread if there is sexual contact or shared bathing.

## Infection Exposure Table

DISEASE	INCUBATION PERIOD (DAYS)	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD (DAYS)
<i>Skin Infections/Rashes:</i>		
Chickenpox	10-21	2 days before rash until all sores have crusts (6 - 7days)
Fifth disease (Erythema infectiosum)	4-14	7 days before rash until rash begins
Hand, foot, and mouth disease	3-6	Onset of mouth ulcers until fever gone
Impetigo (strep or staph)	2-5	Onset of sores until 24 hours on antibiotic
Lice	7	Onset of itch until 1 treatment
Measles	8-12	4 days before rash until 4 days after rash appears
Roseola	9-10	Onset of fever until rash gone (2 days)
Rubella (German measles)	14-21	7 days before rash until 5 days after rash appears
Scabies	30-45	Onset of rash until 1 treatment
Scarlet fever	3-6	Onset of fever or rash until 24 hours on antibiotic
Shingles (contagious for chicken pox)	14-16	Onset of rash until all sores have crusts (7 days) (Note: No need to isolate if sores can be kept covered.)
Warts	30-180	Minimally contagious

### *Respiratory Infections:*

Bronchiolitis	4-6	Onset of cough until 7 days
Colds	2-5	Onset of runny nose until fever gone
Cold sores (herpes)	2-12	Footnote 1
Coughs (viral) or croup (viral)	2-5	Onset of cough until fever gone
Diphtheria	2-5	Onset of sore throat until 4 days on antibiotic
Influenza	1-2	Onset of symptoms until fever gone over 24 hours
Sore throat, strep	2-5	Onset of sore throat until 24 hours on antibiotic
Sore throat, viral	2-5	Onset of sore throat until fever gone
Tuberculosis	6-24 months	Until 2 weeks on drugs (Note: Most childhood TB is not contagious.)
Whooping cough	7-10	Onset of runny nose until 5 days on antibiotic
<b><i>Intestinal Infections:</i></b>		
Diarrhea, bacterial	1-5	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, giardia	7-28	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, traveler's	1-6	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Diarrhea, viral (Rotavirus)	1-3	Footnote 2 for Diarrhea Precautions
Hepatitis A	14-50	2 weeks before jaundice begins until jaundice resolved (7 days)
Pinworms	21-28	Minimally contagious, staying home is unnecessary
Vomiting, viral	2-5	Until vomiting stops
<b><i>Other Infections:</i></b>		
Infectious mononucleosis	30-50	Onset of fever until fever gone (7 days)
Meningitis, bacterial	2-10	7 days before symptoms until 24 hours on IV antibiotics in hospital
Meningitis, viral	3-6	Onset of symptoms and for 1-2 weeks
Mumps	12-25	5 days before swelling until swelling gone (7 days)
Pinkeye without pus	1-5	Mild infection, staying home is unnecessary

(viral)

Pinkeye with pus

2-7

Onset of pus until 1 day on antibiotic eyedrops

(bacterial)

### Notes

1. **Cold sores:** Less than 6 years old, contagious until cold sores are dry (4-5 days). No isolation if sores are on part of body that can be covered. More than 6 years old, no isolation necessary if beyond touching, picking stage.
2. **Diarrhea Precautions:** Contagious until stools are formed. Stay home until fever is gone, diarrhea is mild, blood and mucus are gone, and toilet-trained child has control over loose stools. Shigella and E-coli 0157 require extra precautions. Consult your child care provider regarding attendance restrictions.

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Content Set: Child Symptom Checker

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