

Guam Head Start Program

**A HEALTHY
CHILD NEEDS A
HEALTHY
EDUCATION**



WHY IS GOING TO SCHOOL DAILY IMPORTANT?

- Children who are frequently absent in early grades have a *more difficult* time catching up with their peers.
- Children who frequently miss school have *lower academic achievement*.
- Frequently missing school makes it *more challenging* for children to learn in later years and will have a hard time reading by third grade.

All children will get sick, but we can help your child succeed in school by lowering the number of days your child is absent!



PARENTS' GUIDE TO MANAGING COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS

Some of the most common health problems that cause children to miss a lot of school days:

- ✘ Common colds
- ✘ Fever
- ✘ Pink Eye
- ✘ Vomiting/Diarrhea
- ✘ Head lice
- ✘ Impetigo
- ✘ Asthma
- ✘ Allergies

Here is how you can manage these common health problems and know when to send your child to school or keep your child at home. Please note that this is not a supplement to your primary doctor! Always consult your family doctor to discuss the health of your child.



COMMON COLD:

What causes the common cold?

- There are many viruses that can cause the common cold.

When do you call your doctor?

- Fever above 101F
- Persistent cough
- Ear Pain
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing

Should you send your child to school?

- **YES!** Children with a cold can still be in school as long as they feel well enough to participate in class.

Top stop the spread of the common cold:

- Encourage your child and family to wash their hands
- Teach your child to sneeze away from people and into his/her elbow
- Wipe your child's nose with clean tissues, throw them away, and wash your hands



How do you know if your child has a cold?

- Runny nose
- Clear mucus: This is an indication that it is nothing but the common cold and not the flu. **Children may continue going to school.**
- Allergies may display the same symptoms such as runny nose, sore throat, watery eyes, coughing/sneezing. Allergy medication may be given at home provided it does not cause drowsiness.
- Green/yellow mucus: This may mean that there is a possibility of infection. Normally congestion is present and a fever may follow. **Observe your child, if he/she has a fever. Please keep them home and give them lots of water.**
- Coughing/sneezing
- Stuffy nose
- Watery eyes
- Mild headache/ body ache

VOMITING:

What is vomiting?

- Vomiting is the forceful emptying of stomach contents. Vomiting may cause children to lose minerals, fluids, and salts, which may cause dehydration.

What causes vomiting?

- Many things may cause vomiting. Most of the time, vomiting is caused by gastroenteritis or the "stomach flu." The stomach flu may also cause diarrhea.

Should you send your child to school?

- **NO!** If your child has had two episodes of vomiting, you should keep your child home. Your child may return to school after 24 - 48 hours of no vomiting.

Call your doctor for *any* of these signs of dehydration:

Mild to moderate dehydration:

- Few or no tears when crying
- Dry mouth
- No urination for 6-8 hours

Severe dehydration:

- Very dry mouth
- Dry, wrinkled, or doughy skin (especially on the belly and upper arms and legs)
- Your child looks very tired
- Sunken eyes
- Child is very sleepy
- Child is breathing very deep and fast
- No urination for more than 8-10 hrs in child

How can you manage your child's vomiting?

- Make sure your child gets a lot of rest
- Offer fluids like Pedialyte or Gatorade to prevent dehydration
- Because the digestive system is not digesting properly, incorporate the "BRATS" Diet: B -- Banana, R -- Rice, A -- Applesauce, T -- Toast (plain), S -- Strawberries



FEVER:

What is a fever?

- A fever is a body temperature higher than normal

How do you know if your child has a fever?

- Temperature above 99.5°F
- Warm to touch/flushed cheeks
- Feeling tired/weak
- Coughing
- Vomiting/Diarrhea
- Head ache

Should you send your child to school?

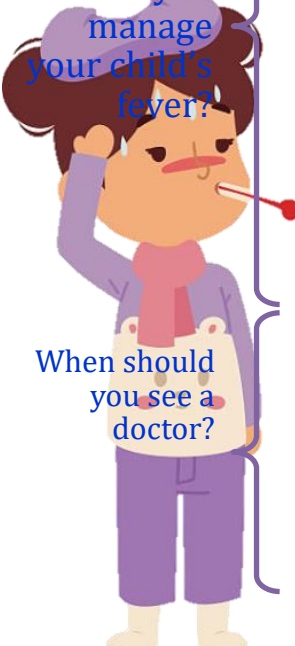
- **NO!** Keep your child home if his/her fever is 101°F or higher or is vomiting until his/her temperature is below 101°F for 24 hours.

How can you manage your child's fever?

- Make sure your child gets a lot of rest
- Offer fluids like Pedialyte or Gatorade to prevent dehydration
- Dress your child in light clothing and cover with a light blanket
- To bring temperature down to normal, place a cool cloth on the following places:
 - Behind the neck
 - On the armpit
 - On the groin area
- Give your child anti-fever medications like Children's Tylenol according to the directions on the box. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD ASPRIN! GIVING YOUR CHILD ASPRIN MAY LEAD TO HAVING A RARE BUT DANGEROUS CONDITION KNOWN AS "REYES SYNDROME."**

When should you see a doctor?

- Your child has persistent diarrhea or repeated vomiting
- Your child has signs of dehydration (peeing less than usual, not having tears when crying, less alert and less active than usual)
- Your child's fever has not gone away for 5 days



DIARRHEA:

What is diarrhea?

- Diarrhea is the passage of loose or water stools at least three times in a 24-hour period.

What causes diarrhea?

- Many things may cause diarrhea. Most of the time, diarrhea is caused by gastroenteritis or the “stomach flu.” The stomach flu may also cause vomiting

Should you send your child to school?

- **NO!** If the child has had two episodes of diarrhea, you should keep your child home. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of no diarrhea.

When should you see a doctor?

- Prolonged episodes of diarrhea
- Repeated vomiting/your child refuses to drink fluids
- Your child has severe stomach pain
- Fever of 102°F or higher
- Few or no tears when crying
- Eyes that look sunken into head
- Your child is very tired
- Your child has not peed for 12 hours (or has a very small amount of urine)

How can you manage your child's diarrhea?

- The primary concern with diarrhea is replacing the fluids and electrolytes lost during diarrhea and vomiting.
- Offer plenty of fluids to your child like Pedialyte or Gatorade



What are head lice?

- Head lice are tiny bugs that live exclusively on the hair and scalp

How do head lice look?

- Tiny lice eggs “nits” can be found attached to the hairs of the head. They can be mistaken for dandruff
- Tiny bugs (“lice”) can be seen crawling in the hair and the scalp
- Head lice can cause itching or a tickling feeling on the head

How do head lice spread?

- Head lice can spread by sharing clothes, hair brushes, and bedding from someone who already has lice

How do you know if your child has head lice?

- The child has head lice when you see live nits or lice in the hair
- Nits will be seen along the strands of the hair, they usually are also found along the hair line behind the ears and the hair line above the neck area.
- When the nits hatch, you will see bugs crawling in and out throughout the hair.

Should you send your child to school?

- **NO!** Lice is contagious. Those who have head lice will pass it on to other children. Nits and crawlers must first be removed completely before returning to school.

To limit the spread of head lice:

- Use the medicated rinse shampoo as recommended by your doctor
- Wash child’s clothes, linens, bedding, and stuffed animals in hot water
- Vacuum carpets and any cloth covered furniture in your home or car
- Minimize sharing of clothes, hairbrushes, hair ties, hats, etc.
- Soak hair-care items in rubbing alcohol for 1 hour, then wash the items in hot, soapy water.
- Arrange an appointment with your doctor to get treatment for the head lice

After the child's head/hair has been rid of the nits/crawlers, the parent **MUST** first get clearance from the school nurse.

IMPETIGO:

What is impetigo?

It is a contagious skin infection caused by bacteria that mainly affects infants and children.

How does impetigo look like?

Impetigo looks like red sores on the face, especially on the child's mouth and nose

Impetigo can also appear on the child's arms and legs, buttocks, and torso.

The red sores can pop and turn into honey colored crusts

How does impetigo spread?

Scratching or touching the sores on the skin

Sharing clothes, towels, and blankets

Should you send your child to school?

NO! Keep your home because impetigo is highly contagious. Call your doctor because your child will need treatment for impetigo.

When can your child come back to school?

Your child can come back after 24 hours he/she receives antibiotic treatment and when the sores stop oozing and have crusted over. The sores must be covered with band-aids/dressings

To prevent getting/spreading impetigo:

Practice good handwashing

Do not touch the sores! Be sure to cover the affected area to prevent contamination of other areas of the body.

Wash your child's bedding, towels, and clothes at home

Clean your child's toys and hard surfaces in your home with a disinfectant



CONJUNCTIVITIS ("PINK EYE")

What is "pink eye?"

- Pink eye is an inflammation of the conjunctiva (the clear part of the eye that covers the white part of the eye and the inner surface of the eyelids)

What causes pink eye?

- Many of the viruses and bacteria responsible for colds and other infections
- Allergens like dust, grass, pollen, and animal dander can cause pink eye
- Sometimes a substance in the environment can irritate the eyes and cause pinkeye, such as chemicals (chlorine, soaps, etc.) or air pollutants (smoke and fumes).

How does pink eye spread?

- A child can get pinkeye by touching an infected person or something the infected person has touched, i.e. used tissue, toys, blankets, and then touching his/her own eye

How do you know a child has pink eye?

- Redness and itchiness in one or both eyes
- Clear, yellow, or green discharge in one or both eyes
- Tearing

Should you send your child to school?

- **NO!** Pink eye is contagious and your child needs to be seen by a doctor.

When can your child come back to school?

- Your child may return to school after 24 hours of starting antibiotic treatment and until there is no discharge from the eyes.

To minimize the spread of pink eye



- Encourage your child and family to wash their hands
- Use antibiotic eye drops as recommended by your doctor
- Encourage your child to not rub his/her eyes
- Clean your child's toys and hard surfaces with a disinfectant
- Wash your child's bed linens and clothes in hot water separate from your family's laundry
- A clean dampened warm washcloth may be placed over affected eye to dilate the tear ducts and remove the pus from the eyes to prevent further continuation.

ASTHMA:

What is asthma? Asthma is a condition in which the lungs and airways get irritated from certain triggers (i.e., pollen, smoke, pet hair, etc.)

- Asthma can cause bothersome symptoms that interfere with sport, school, play and sleep.
- If asthma is not managed, unmanaged asthma can lead to dangerous asthma attacks which may result in hospitalization, even death.

Children with asthma need an “Asthma Action Plan” in order to have their asthma controlled at school.
What is an “Asthma Action Plan?”

- It is a written plan between a doctor, parent, teachers, and school nurse to help control a child’s asthma at school
- An asthma action plan:
 - Includes a list of what triggers your child’s asthma flare-ups
 - Shows daily treatment (i.e. what kind of medications to take and when to take them)
 - What to do based on severity of symptoms
 - Who to call in case of an asthma emergency
 - When to go to an emergency room

Should you send your child to school?

- **YES!** School personnel are trained to help your child with his/her special needs

When do seek help immediately?

- The child has difficulty breathing/breathing fast
- Whistling/wheezing sounds when the child exhales
- Child’s nostrils are widened when breathing in
- The child is using his stomach muscles to breath
- The child’s lips are blue
- The child has to stop in midsentence to catch his/her breath
- Use of accessory muscles (shoulder) to catch a breath.



FOOD ALLERGIES:

What is a food allergy?

- A food allergy is an over reactive response to a food caused by the body's immune system.

Managing your child's food allergies is a group effort between a doctor, school nurse, teacher, and family!

- A doctor's note that includes the diagnosis of a food allergy and the reaction that happens after exposure to the particular allergen your child is sensitive to.
- Talk to your doctor and your child's teacher to create a Food Allergy Management and Prevention Plan (FAMPP) that includes the following:
 - What foods to avoid
 - What to do in case the child experiences an allergic reaction to the allergen the child is allergic to
 - What medications the child needs to take in an allergic emergency (i.e. epinephrine)
 - Who to call in case of an allergic emergency

How do you know if your child has an allergic reaction?

- Hives
- Coughing/wheezing
- Throat tightness
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Swelling of the mouth, tongue, eyes, face
- Itching of any part of the body



How can you keep your child from getting an allergic reaction?

- Pay special attention to the ingredients listed in food products. Avoid feeding your child the food he/she is allergic to
- Keep an open line of communication with your child's teacher.
- Encourage your child to wash his/her hands before and after eating
- Remind your child to not accept food from anyone else in the class.

TIPS FOR PARENTS!

When students miss too many days of school, they fall behind and struggle to keep up with their classmates. Whether the days missed is due to illness, truancy or for any other reason, the end result for the student is the same — learning time is lost. Children will get sick at times and may need to stay at home, but we want to work with you to help minimize the number of days your student misses school.

Missed Days Add Up Quickly!

Just a few missed days a month adds up to several school weeks missed in a year.

Both excused and unexcused absences can make it more difficult for your child to keep up with other students, especially in math and reading.

Missing school during these early years makes it more difficult for children to learn in later years and they often have trouble reading by the end of third grade.

Helpful Ideas:

Call the school as soon as you know your child will be absent and tell school staff why your child will be out and for how long.

Be prepared to get a doctor's note when requested by school personnel.

If your child has an emergency, call 911.



MORE TIPS FOR PARENTS!

Work with Your Child and Your School

As the parent, be strong with your child and don't let your child stay home when it is not necessary. This will help your child succeed.

If your child has a chronic disease, make sure that the school staff is aware of the disease so the staff can assist your child if he or she becomes ill. Information about your child's chronic disease should be noted on the school emergency or health information card.

For students with asthma: if your child has asthma, the school needs an Asthma Action Plan. Make sure that all supplies (inhaler, spacer, etc.) needed to manage your child's asthma are at with the school nurse.

For students with diabetes: if your child has diabetes, the school needs a Diabetes Management Plan completed by his or her doctor. Make sure that all supplies (insulin, blood sugar meter, test strips) needed to manage your child's diabetes are with the school nurse.

Keep an open line of communication with school staff and teachers. The more the school knows about your child's health, the better prepared everyone will be to work together for your child.

For additional information contact:

Guam Head Start Program at 475-0484



