

## Module 3: Recognizing & Managing Communicable Diseases

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### Handout K: When a Child Is Too Sick to Attend

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Most children with mild illnesses can safely attend child care. But, a child may be too sick to attend if:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities.
- The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
- The child has any of the following **symptoms** unless a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious:
  - *Fever* (above 100° F. axillary or above 101° F. orally) accompanied by behavior change and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e., the child looks and acts sick)
  - *Signs or symptoms of possibly severe illness* (e.g., persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, lethargy)
  - *Diarrhea*: Changes from the child's usual stool pattern—increased frequency of stools, looser/watery stools, stool runs out of the diaper, or child can't get to the bathroom in time.
  - *Vomiting* more than once in the previous 24 hours
  - *Mouth sores* with drooling
  - *Rash* with a fever or behavior change
- The child has any of the following **diagnoses** from a health provider (until treated and/or no longer contagious):
  - *Infectious conjunctivitis/pink-eye* (with eye discharge)—until 24 hours after treatment started
  - *Scabies, head lice, or other infestation*—until 24 hours after treatment and free of nits
  - *Impetigo*—until 24 hours after treatment started
  - *Strep throat, scarlet fever, or other strep infection*—until 24 hours after treatment started and the child is free of fever
  - *Pertussis*—until five days after treatment started
  - *Tuberculosis (TB)*—until a health care provider determines that the disease is not contagious
  - *Chicken pox*—until six days after start of rash or all sores have crusted over
  - *Mumps*—until nine days after start of symptoms (swelling of “cheeks”)
  - *Hepatitis A*—until seven days after start of symptoms (e.g., jaundice)
  - *Measles*—until six days after start of rash
  - *Rubella (German measles)*—until six days after start of rash
  - *Oral herpes* (if child is drooling or lesions cannot be covered)—until lesions heal
  - *Shingles* (if lesions cannot be covered)—until lesions are dry

Adapted from: *Caring for Our Children*, American Academy of Pediatrics and American Public Health Association, 1992.