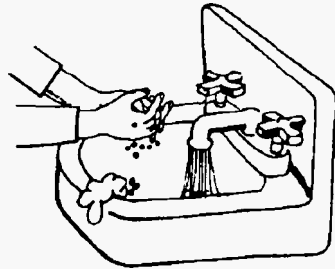


There are many things you can do to prevent the spread of illness:

- Keep your child's **immunizations** up-to-date. Childhood immunizations are free at the Kent County Health Department.
- Teach your child to **wash his hands** often. Teach him to wash hands under warm running water using liquid soap. Teach him to lather hands for at least 15 seconds and to dry hands with a paper towel.



- Teach your child to **cough or sneeze into her shoulder** instead of into her hands by lifting her arm, and turning her head.
- Your child needs **healthy meals and snacks**. He also needs plenty of sleep. A strong body fights germs better.



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Copies of this brochure are available on
the Health Department web site at

www.co.kent.mi.us/health

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When to Keep Your Child at Home



This pamphlet describes:

- common childhood illnesses,
- how illnesses are spread, and
- prevention of childhood illnesses.

How are diseases spread?

- Germs are found in a person's saliva, nasal discharge, stool, blood or other body fluids.



- Germs are spread to another person by:
 - a.) direct contact with a sick person. For example, touching, hugging, kissing, and handshakes



- b.) indirect contact with a sick person. For example, germs in the air, on objects like door knobs and toilets or in food that has been handled by a sick person
- Germs enter the other person's body through broken skin, breathing, swallowing, and mucous membranes.

Watch for these signs of illness:

- fever - above 101 degrees
- sores on the skin
- unexplained rash
- diarrhea that prevents normal play
- vomiting - 2 or more times in 24 hours
- green or yellow runny nose
- cough that lasts longer than a few days
- sore throat that lasts longer than a few days
- tiredness that prevents normal play
- headache that prevents normal play
- wheezing when taking a breath

If you see any of these signs of illness, call your doctor (or health care provider) and watch your child to see if symptoms get worse.

If you are pregnant and your child has any disease, contact your doctor in case special care is needed to protect the unborn baby.

How disease spreads:	Disease and incubation period: (The incubation period is the time between contact with a germ and the time you get sick.)	Information about Common Diseases Symptoms	When to keep child home and contagious period: (The contagious period is the length of time a sick person can spread germs to others.)
Germs are spread from nose or mouth (sneezing, coughing, talking) and breathed by someone else.	Chicken Pox (10 - 21 days)	The rash begins as red bumps that look like blisters, then blisters crust and form scabs. New blisters keep forming for about 4 days. Your child may have fever, body aches, and loss of appetite.	Keep your child at home for at least 1 week after rash begins, and until blisters are dry and crusted. (Contagious period: 5 days before rash to 6 days after rash first starts).
	Fifth Disease (6 - 14 days)	The illness starts with a mild fever and a red rose rash on the cheeks. The rash spreads to arms, legs and buttocks. It can last for a week or more and may return on and off for 2 or 3 weeks.	You do not have to keep your child at home because the disease is so mild. (Contagious period is 1 to 3 days before the rash appears.)
	Influenza (Flu) (1 - 3 days)	Symptoms of flu include sudden fever (100 - 103 °F), chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat and a dry cough. General cold symptoms may follow, which include: runny nose, ear pain and a tired feeling. Cough and tiredness may last for 1 to 2 weeks.	Keep your child at home for 3 to 5 days and until he is able to play normally. (Contagious period: about 1 day before symptoms until 3 to 5 days after first symptoms.)
	Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever (1 - 5 days)	Strep Throat symptoms include fever, sore throat, and swollen neck glands. The same symptoms appear with a cold; but if the sore throat lasts more than three days, a throat culture test is advised. Scarlet Fever has the same symptoms along with vomiting, headache, and a bright red rash spreading over the body.	Keep your child at home until seen by a doctor and under antibiotic treatment. (Contagious period varies. If not treated, your child can be contagious for months.)
Touching wound drainage from an infected person	Impetigo (4 - 10 days)	Impetigo begins with sores on the skin that look like blisters which become crusted and break, leaking a yellow fluid.	Keep your child at home until seen by a doctor and under antibiotic treatment. (Contagious period varies. If not treated, your child can be contagious for months.)
	Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) (1 - 3 days)	Pink Eye is an infection of the eye that causes pain, redness, tearing and, sometimes, pus. The eyelid can become swollen.	Keep your child at home until seen by a doctor and under antibiotic treatment. (Contagious period is until symptoms are gone.)

Physical contact with people, clothing and/or belongings infested with parasites	Lice (17 - 27 days)	Lice bites produce small, red bumps and severe itching of the scalp. The lice or their eggs (nits) may be seen in the hair.	Check the policy at your school. (Contagious period is until eggs and lice have been killed by treating hair, clothing, and personal items with approved treatment.) Treatment is available at the Kent County Health Department.
	Pinworm (2 weeks - 2 months)	Pinworm causes itching in the area around the rectum which gets worse at night and can disturb sleep. Other symptoms include teeth grinding at night and stomach pain.	Keep your child home until seen by doctor and under treatment. (Contagious period is until pinworm is killed by medicine.)
	Scabies (14 - 17 days)	Mites living under the skin cause severe itching from pimples or blisters. Areas most infected are between fingers, inside elbows, on inner thighs and between buttocks.	Keep your child home until seen by doctor and under treatment. (Contagious period is until mites have been killed by medicine.)
	Ringworm (few weeks - few months)	Ringworm is a fungus on the skin or scalp that causes round patches of dry skin or hair loss.	Keep your child at home until seen by a doctor and under treatment. (Contagious period is until treatment is finished.)
Food, drink or objects contaminated with feces or stool; germ is swallowed by another person	Viral Gastroenteritis (1- 2 days)	The most common symptom of this group of diseases is diarrhea. Other symptoms may include fever, nausea, vomiting and cramps. There is danger of dehydration if symptoms last more than 1 day in small children.	Keep your child at home from start of disease until symptoms end. See your doctor if symptoms do not end in 2 days. (Contagious period varies with the disease.)
	Other types of gastroenteritis: Campylobacter, E.Coli, Giardia, Salmonella, Shigella, Yersinia (1 - 25 days)	The symptoms include: fever, headache, vomiting, cramps and diarrhea with mucus or blood. The symptoms may last from several days to 1 week. There is danger of dehydration for small children.	Keep child at home as advised by doctor. (Contagious period varies with the disease but may be spread through stool for up to 7 weeks after symptoms stop.)