

## Sick Day Guidelines

### The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) and Triaminic® bring you Helpful Tips for Handling Sick Days

You just know when your child isn't feeling well, but how can you know when coughs and sniffles mean it's time to keep your child home from school? Or when to call the doctor? Since school-aged children get up to 10 colds a year, it can be a puzzle for many parents.

That's why the [National Association of School Nurses \(NASN\)](#) and Triaminic® have partnered to create "Sick Day Guidelines: Making the Right Call When Your Child Has a Cold." Some 22 million school days are missed each year in the U.S. due to colds, which are also the leading cause of doctor visits and missed school and work days.

Read on for useful information to help you make the right call on your child's next sick day.

### Should I keep my child home or send him or her to school?

Consider keeping your child home if he or she:

- Has a fever of 99 degrees or higher
- Has been vomiting
- Has symptoms that prevent him or her from participating in school, such as:
  - Excessive tiredness or lack of appetite
  - Productive coughing, sneezing
  - Headache, body aches, earache
  - Sore throat

### Parents Want to Know

If you're unsure when to keep your child home from school, you have lots of company. A nationwide study conducted for Triaminic® found these important results:

- 83% of parents worried that they might have sent their child back to school too soon at least once
- 78% said it would be useful to have Sick Day Guidelines
- 79% said it's important to have information to help them understand the type of medication or treatment their child needs

A minor sore throat is usually not a problem, but a severe sore throat could be strep throat even if there is no fever. Other symptoms of strep throat in children are headache and stomach upset. Contact your pediatrician as your child needs a special test to determine if it is strep throat.

**Keep your child home until his or her fever has been gone for 24 hours without medication.** Colds can be contagious for at least 48 hours. Returning to school too soon may slow the recovery process and can unnecessarily expose others to illness.

Please note, these tips should not take the place of medical advice from a doctor or pediatrician. Parents should also be aware of guidelines specific to their child's school.

### **Does my child have the flu?**

The flu is serious! Call your pediatrician at the first sign of flu symptoms, which typically come on suddenly, including:

- High fever
- Chills
- Head ache, body aches, ear ache
- Nausea, vomiting
- Dry cough

If you're unsure about the best way to treat your child's cold or flu, ask your school nurse, doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider.

### **How do I make my child feel better?**

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and put limits on TV watching
- Encourage fluids; such as water, soup, juice and ice
- Help your child relax by reading him or her a story and giving him plenty of TLC
- Consider using a cool humidifier
- When used as directed, children's cough and cold medicines help relieve cough and cold symptoms while your child is getting better. Read and follow the directions carefully and give the exact recommended dose for the child's age. Do not use over the counter cough and cold medications for children under the age of four in the U.S.

### **How can I prevent my child from getting a cold?**

- Teach your child to wash his or her hands frequently using plenty of soap and warm water. Proper hand-washing should take about 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice
- Teach your child to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their sleeve
- Keep the child's environment tobacco free
- Try to minimize the time your child spends with other children who have cough or cold symptoms
- Pack easy-to-use products like disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizers in your child's backpack to use when he or she is at school
- Keep an annual well-child exam to follow changes in your child's health
- Keep all of your child's immunizations up-to-date (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines now recommend a flu vaccine for most children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday)
- Serve a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. Giving a daily vitamin may be recommended by your pediatrician
- After your child is feeling better, clean all surfaces; wash the bedding and air out the room
- Keep surfaces like door knobs, phones, remote controls, toys, and keyboards clean
- Always make sure to consult your school nurse or doctor if you have any questions