

Health Information from the SVE School Nurses

It is not unusual for common illnesses and other health issues to present themselves in the school setting. Below are descriptions and actions to take for some of those common health issues:

PINWORM:

Pinworm is the most common worm infection in the United States. School-age children, followed by preschoolers, have the highest rates of infection. Cases of pinworm infection are seen most often at schools, daycare centers and other institutional settings.



Pinworms are white, parasitic worms that can live in the large intestine of humans. They are about one-half inch long. While the infected person sleeps, female pinworms leave the intestinal tract and lay their eggs on the skin around the anus. The eggs are laid in a sticky, jelly-like substance that, along with the wriggling of the female pinworm, causes severe itching.

Treating pinworms involves either prescription or over-the-counter drugs. Consult a health care provider before treating a suspected pinworm infection.

HEAD LICE (PEDICULOSIS)



Pediculosis is an infestation of the hairy parts of the body or clothing with the eggs, larvae or adults of lice. The crawling stages of this insect feed on human blood, which can result in severe itching. Head lice are usually located on the scalp.

Usually, the first indication of an infestation is the itching or scratching in the area of the body where the lice feed. Scratching at the back of the head or around the ears should lead to an examination for head louse eggs (nits) on the hair.

Medicated shampoos or cream rinses containing pyrethrins or permethrin are preferred for treating people with head lice. Retreatment after 7 to 10 days is often recommended to ensure that no eggs have survived. Nit combs are available to help remove nits from hair. Dose and duration of shampoo treatment should be followed carefully according to label instructions.

SCABIES



Scabies is a fairly common infectious disease of the skin caused by a mite. Scabies mites burrow into the skin producing pimple-like irritations or burrows. Scabies infestations can affect people from all socioeconomic levels without regard to age, sex, race or standards of personal hygiene. Clusters of cases or outbreaks are occasionally seen in nursing homes, institutions and child care centers. Skin lotions or creams containing scabicides are available through a physician's prescription for the treatment of scabies. Persons who have had skin contact with an infested person (including family members, roommates, direct care providers and sexual contacts) should also be treated.

(additional info on back page)

WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send children to school when they wake up with symptoms of an illness or complaints that they do not feel well. In general, during cold and flu season, unless your child is significantly ill, the best place for them is in school where they have all already been exposed to the same germs and where they are less likely to expose other more vulnerable people, like the very young or very



old. Remind your children to discard used tissues promptly, not to share personal items, to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze, to keep their hands away from their face, and to wash hands thoroughly and often with soap and warm water. However, there are some situations in which it is best to plan on keeping your child home for a day to rest or to arrange for an appointment with your health care provider:

- Persistent fever greater than 100.4° orally, including a fever that requires control with medication such as Tylenol
- Child is too sleepy or ill from an illness, like vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class
- Sore throat that is severe along with fever and feeling ill for more than 48 hours, OR after known exposure to a confirmed case of Strep throat infection
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose or mouth or rash on other body parts; OR a rash in various stages including boils, sores and bumps that may be chicken pox; OR a significant rash accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever
- Red, runny eyes that distract the child from learning
- Large amount of discolored nasal discharge, especially if accompanied by facial pain or headache
- Severe ear pain or drainage from the ear
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever
- Any condition that you think may be serious or contagious to others.

If you know your child is still running a fever, it is not a good idea simply to give them Tylenol and send them onto school. As soon as the medicine wears off, you are apt to get a call from the school nurse to leave work and come to pick up your feverish child. It is better to let them stay home in bed with a fever and take their medications at home until they are off all medicines and ready to learn for a full day in a classroom.

We are hopeful that this information is helpful to you. Please feel free to call the school nurses if you should have any questions.

Thank you!