# Recommended absence period for preventing the spread of infection

This list of recommended absence periods for preventing the spread of infection is taken from [non-statutory guidance for schools and other childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522337/Guidance_on_infection_control_in_schools.pdf) from Public Health England (PHE).

**Rashes and skin infections**

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| **Infection or complaint** | **Recommended period to be kept away from school or nursery** | **Comments** |
| **Athlete’s foot** | None | Athlete’s foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended. |
| **Chickenpox** | Until all vesicles have crusted over | Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. These children are particularly vulnerable to chickenpox. Chickenpox can also affect pregnancy if a woman has not already had the infection. |
| **Cold sores (herpes simplex)** | None | Avoid kissing and contact with the sores. Cold sores are generally mild and self-limiting. |
| **German measles (rubella)\*** | Four days from onset of rash (as per “[Green Book](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book)”) | Preventable by immunisation (MMR x2 doses). If a pregnant woman comes into contact with German measles she should inform her GP and antenatal carer immediately to ensure investigation.  |
| **Hand, foot and mouth** | None |  |
| **Impetigo** | Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment | Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period. |
| **Measles\*** | Four days from onset of rash | Preventable by immunisation (MMR x2 doses). Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. These children are particularly vulnerable to measles. Measles during pregnancy can result in early delivery or even loss of the baby. If a pregnant woman is exposed she should immediately inform whoever is giving antenatal care to ensure investigation. |
| **Molluscum contagiosum** | None | A self-limiting condition. |
| **Ringworm** | Exclusion not usually required | Treatment is required. |
| **Roseola (infantum)**  | None  |  |
| **Scabies** | Child can return after first treatment | Household and close contacts require treatment. |
| **Scarlet fever\*** | Child can return 24 hours after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment | Antibiotic treatment is recommended for the affected child. |
| **Slapped cheek syndrome/fifth disease (parvovirus B19)** | None (once rash has developed) | Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. These children are particularly vulnerable to parvovirus B19. Slapped cheek disease (parvovirus B19) can occasionally affect an unborn child. If exposed early in pregnancy (before 20 weeks), inform whoever is giving antenatal care as this must be investigated promptly. |
| **Shingles** | Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered | Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune, i.e. have not had chickenpox. It is spread by very close contact and touch. If further information is required, contact your local PHE centre. Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. These children are particularly vulnerable to shingles. Shingles can also affect pregnancy if a woman has not already had chickenpox. |
| **Warts and verrucae** | None | Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms. |

**Diarrhoea and vomiting illness**

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| **Infection or complaint** | **Recommended period to be kept away from school or nursery** | **Comments** |
| **Diarrhoea and/or vomiting** | 48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting |  |
| **E. coli O157 VTEC****Typhoid\* [and paratyphoid\*] (enteric fever) Shigella (dysentery)** | Should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea. Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting | Further exclusion is required for children aged 5 years or younger and those who have difficulty in adhering to hygiene practices. Children in these categories should be excluded until there is evidence of microbiological clearance. This guidance may also apply to some contacts who may also require microbiological clearance. Please consult your local PHE centre for further advice |
| **Cryptosporidiosis** | Exclude for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea | Exclusion from swimming is advisable for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled |

**Respiratory infections**

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| **Infection or complaint** | **Recommended period to be kept away from school or nursery** | **Comments** |
| **Flu (influenza)** | Until recovered | Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. It may be advisable for these children to have additional immunisations, for example pneumococcal and influenza. |
| **Tuberculosis\*** | Always consult your local PHE centre | Some medical conditions make children vulnerable to infections that would rarely be serious in most children, these include those being treated for leukaemia or other cancers. It may be advisable for these children to have additional immunisations, for example pneumococcal and influenza. |
| **Whooping cough\*** | Five days from starting antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment | Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. Your local PHE centre will organise any contact tracing necessary.  |

**Other infections**

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| **Infection or complaint** | **Recommended period to be kept away from school or nursery** | **Comments** |
| **Conjunctivitis** | None | If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult your local PHE centre. |
| **Diphtheria\*** | Exclusion is essential. Always consult with your local HPT | Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by your local PHE centre. Preventable by vaccination. Your local PHE centre will organise any contact tracing necessary.  |
| **Glandular fever** | None |  |
| **Head lice** | None | Treatment is recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen. |
| **Hepatitis A\*** | Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice) | In an outbreak of hepatitis A, your local PHE centre will advise on control measures. |
| **Hepatitis B\*, C\*, HIV/AIDS** | None | Hepatitis B and C and HIV are bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. All spillages of blood should be cleaned up immediately (always wear PPE). When spillages occur, clean using a product that combines both a detergent and a disinfectant. Use as per manufacturer’s instructions and ensure it is effective against bacteria and viruses and suitable for use on the affected surface. Never use mops for cleaning up blood and body fluid spillages – use disposable paper towels and discard clinical waste as described below. A spillage kit should be available for blood spills. |
| **Meningococcal meningitis\*/ septicaemia\*** | Until recovered | Meningitis C is preventable by vaccination There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. In case of an outbreak, it may be necessary to provide antibiotics with or without meningococcal vaccination to close school contacts. Your local PHE centre will advise on any action is needed. |
| **Meningitis\* due to other bacteria** | Until recovered | Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. Your local PHE centre will give advice on any action needed. |
| **Meningitis viral\*** | None | Milder illness. There is no reason to exclude siblings and other close contacts of a case. Contact tracing is not required. |
| **MRSA** | None  | Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise any danger of spread. If further information is required, contact your local PHE centre. |
| **Mumps\*** | Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling | Preventable by vaccination  |
| **Threadworms** | None | Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts. |
| **Tonsillitis** | None | There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic. |

\* denotes a notifiable disease. It is a statutory requirement that doctors report a notifiable disease to the proper officer of the local authority (usually a consultant in communicable disease control). In addition, organisations may be required via locally agreed arrangements to inform their local PHE centre. Regulating bodies (for example, Ofsted/Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI)) may wish to be informed.