

Too sick for work?



Employers often wonder when employees are too sick to report to work. **The spread of common illnesses such as COVID, flu, gastrointestinal illnesses (diarrhea), pink eye (conjunctivitis) and strep can be limited when individuals stay home and away from other people when they're sick.**

Employees should stay home when they have:

- **Diarrhea** *Three or more loose stools in a 24-hour period.*
- **Vomiting**
- **Fever**
 - ▶ 100.4°F or over with symptoms **OR** 101°F or over if no other symptoms

WHEN TO RETURN TO WORK AFTER DIARRHEA, VOMITING OR FEVER

People experiencing diarrhea, vomiting and/or fever should **remain home until they have been symptom-free, without the aid of medication, for at least 24 hours.**

Employees should stay home AND be encouraged to contact their doctor when they have:

These illnesses should be reported to employees' manager or Infection Prevention Team.

- **Pink eye (Conjunctivitis)**
 - ▶ If the infection is bacterial and antibiotics are prescribed by a doctor, employee should stay home until they have been taking antibiotics for 24 hours.
 - ▶ If employee is not on antibiotics, they should stay home until their doctor releases them.
- **Strep** Employee should stay home until BOTH of the following have occurred:
 - ▶ It has been at least 24 hours since their first dose of antibiotics, AND
 - ▶ They have been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- **A productive cough** Employee should stay home. The Health Department recommends that an employee experiencing a productive cough seek medical care to determine appropriate testing and treatment.
- **Positive COVID-19 test** *Regardless of vaccination status*
 - ▶ Stay home in accordance with current [CDC Isolation Guidance](#).
- **Rashes or sores** Employee should stay home and seek guidance from their healthcare provider.
 - ▶ Rash in conjunction with fever
 - ▶ A rash or draining sores that can not be covered
 - ▶ Mouth sores with drooling

You can help prevent the spread of illness.

- 1 **Wash hands.**
Remind all employees to wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are a good alternative when soap and water are not available, but they are not as good as hand washing.
- 2 **Cover coughs.**
Remind employees to cover coughs and sneezes with their inner elbow or a tissue. Remind employees to always wash hands after coughing or sneezing.
- 3 **Don't share personal items.**
Items such as drinking cups, utensils, towels, clothes, and hair care items such as brushes may contain germs that can make you sick.
- 4 **Mask when appropriate.**
Remind employees to follow public health recommendations.



Questions? Dial 770-339-4260 and ask for the Epi on Call. After Hours call 1-866-PUB-HLTH or 404-323-1910.

This information was adapted from www.choa.org/parent-resources/everyday-illnesses/too-sick-for-school and AAP "Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th Edition".