

Guide to Childhood Illness

ILLNESS	WHAT YOU SEE	EXCLUDE	WHAT YOU DO	WHEN CAN THE CHILD/STAFF MEMBER RETURN TO HEAD START
Bedbugs	Small insects that feed on human blood by biting through the skin. They are most active at night. Bites may look like a small rash and are itchy. Bedbugs do not transmit or spread disease.	NO	Fingernails should be kept short to avoid damaging and infecting the skin due to itching. Watch for signs of skin infection and contact your child's health care provider to ask about using a pain reliever or anti-itch cream.	Leave backpack and extra clothing at home to avoid spread, or place in plastic bag upon arrival each day.
Chickenpox (Varicella)	Itchy, blistery rash with mild fever. Blisters usually occur in clumps and are more commonly seen on the stomach, chest and back. After several days, blisters scab over. Some children have only a few blisters, others can have several hundred.	YES	Talk to your child's health care provider and ask about using over-the-counter pain/fever medicine. Give child plenty of fluids. Prevent scratching by trimming fingernails and putting gloves on the child during the night. Pregnant women exposed to this disease should consult with their health care provider.	Stay home, until all the blisters are crusted, with no oozing scabs. (usually six days after onset of rash and no new lesions have appeared for at least 24 hours). A health care provider must verify this diagnosis. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Updated 2026

Cold Sores & Mouth Sores (Herpes Simplex)	Fever, painful, small, fluid-filled or red blisters on mouth, gums or lips. The sores are usually reddish or purple and can appear one-at-a-time or in little bunches.	NO, unless Not able to control drooling (contact your nurse for further guidance)	The sores should be kept dry and covered if possible. Do not allow children to share toys, touch the sores or share drinks. Wash hands often to avoid the spread of sores.	Drooling is controlled and must be able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Cough	Response to something that is irritating tissues in the airway anywhere from the nose to the lungs. Child may have a dry or wet cough, runny nose, sore throat or coughing fits.	NO, unless Severe, rapid or difficulty breathing.	Contact your child's health care provider if the coughing is interfering with the child breathing and causing them not to participate fully in classroom activities.	Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
COVID-19	Fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, cough, nasal congestion, diarrhea, vomiting, stomachache sore throat, tiredness, fatigue, headache, muscle or body	YES	Get plenty of rest and drink fluids. Ask a health care provider about using over the counter pain or fever medicine. Use good handwashing and wash often. Sanitize contaminated items.	Must be diagnosed by a health care provider. Children-if tested positive should stay home 5 days from the start of symptoms. May return when all other exclusion criteria are resolved, respiratory symptoms are improving and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	aches or new loss of taste or smell.		Dispose of tissues containing nose and throat secretions.	Staff-if tested positive may come to work when all other exclusion criteria are resolved, respiratory symptoms are improving and able to participate fully in classroom activities. Staff must mask for 5 days from the start of symptoms.
Croup	A tight, low-pitched, and barking cough (like a barking seal). Caused by a viral infection of the voice box (larynx). Severe croup can cause a harsh, tight sound while breathing in. This is called stridor. You could also have fever, chills and trouble breathing. Croup spreads easily through coughing, sneezing, and respiratory secretions. It is contagious for three days after the illness begins or until the fever is gone.	NO, unless Having difficulty breathing	Run a cool mist humidifier next to your bed. Monitor for troubled breathing. Do not allow anyone to smoke around the sick person. Do NOT take any cough medication.	Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Diarrhea (non-infectious)	Stools that are more frequent or less formed than usual for the person and not associated with changes in diet.	YES, if Stool cannot be contained in the diaper, or if a toilet child has 2 or more loose stools in 24 hours, or blood in stool.	Get plenty of rest and give a diet of clear liquids. Breastfeeding children can continue. If symptoms continue, fever occurs, or if blood appears in stool, call your child's health care provider. The child and caregivers should wash hands frequently.	When diarrhea stops and there is resolution of exclusion criteria. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Diarrhea (infectious bacterial or viral) Clostridium difficile (C-diff), Cryptosporidiosis, E.coli (STEC), Giardiasis, Norovirus, Rotavirus, Salmonella Shigellosis	Some may last 1-20 days or longer (average of 10 days). Watery frequent diarrhea. Belly pain, headache, vomiting, and fever.	YES, if The local health department determines exclusion is needed to control an outbreak. Unable to participate fully at school and if they meet the exclusion criteria for Diarrhea (non-infectious)	Talk to your child's health care provider. Medication may be prescribed to slow the watery stools. An antibiotic may be needed. Use good handwashing and wash hands often to reduce spread of infection.	Approved by the Public Health Department and when diarrhea stops and there is resolution of exclusion criteria as listed in Diarrhea (non-infectious) Children with infectious diarrhea should not participate in water play activities for 2 weeks. Staff should not cook or handle food. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Ear Infection (Otitis Media)	There are 2 common types of ear infection: otitis media (middle ear infection) and otitis externa (swimmer's ear). Most ear infections of young children occur in the middle ear. Child may have pain inside the ear when moving the earlobe. Child may be fussy, irritable, crying and may have ear drainage. Child may also have a fever.	NO, unless Not able to participate fully in school or other exclusion criteria are met.	Talk to your child's health care provider. They may prescribe antibiotics or numbing eardrops for pain. They may also prescribe over-the-counter fever/pain relievers. Use good hand washing.	Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities. A Health care provider must verify this diagnosis.
Fever	An increase in body temperature above normal. Does not always mean there is an illness. Fever can be caused by a viral, bacterial, or parasitic infection, vigorous exercise, reaction to a medication or	NO, unless There is a behavior change or other signs of illness in addition to fever.	Call child's health care provider if: *child is uncomfortable or has a change in behavior. *is under 4 months of age and has an unexplained fever. *Infants younger than 2 months of	When exclusion criteria are resolved Must be fever free and off fever reducing medication for 24 hours and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	vaccine or other noninfectious illness. May be flushed, tired, irritable and have decreased energy. A fever is defined as: *Infant or child older than 2 months 101°F by any method. *Infants younger than 2 months 100.4°F by any method.		age, with a temperature above 100.4°F (38.0°C) is considered meaningfully elevated and requires the child get medical attention immediately. Call ahead to speak with your medical provider to see if they need to see your child.	
Fifth Disease (Erythema Infectiosum)	Fever, headache and very red cheeks. Lace-like rash on chest, stomach, arms and legs that lasts 3 days to 3 weeks. You may see the rash off and on.	NO, unless Other exclusion criteria are met	Wash hands often. Sanitize contaminated items. Dispose of tissues containing nose and throat secretions.	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, may return when there is a resolution of exclusion criteria. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
H1N1 Influenza	Fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may vomit or have	YES	Talk to your health care provider. Ask about over-the-counter fever/pain relievers and antiviral medicine. Get plenty of rest.	When exclusion criteria are resolved Must be fever free and off fever reducing medication for 24 hours and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	diarrhea.			
Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (Enterovirus Infections)	Common set of symptoms associated with a viral infection. Mild fever, poor appetite, sick feeling, and sore throat. 1-2 days after fever begins child will have sores in the mouth and a rash with blisters. Rash is usually located on the palms of hands and soles of feet. It spreads through respiratory droplets, contact with respiratory secretions or in fecal matter.	NO, unless Other exclusion criteria are met or there is excessive drooling with mouth sores.	Talk to your child's health care provider and ask about over-the-counter fever/pain relievers. Use good hand washing.	If excluded due to presence of other exclusion criteria, may return when there is a resolution of exclusion criteria. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Hepatitis A	A viral infection causing liver inflammation. Stomach pain, sick feeling, fever and diarrhea. Skin and white part of eyes might turn yellow.	YES Should be excluded for 1 week after onset of illness.	Call your child's health care provider IMMEDIATELY. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when the child can return to school.	May return to school one week after the start of symptoms, or as directed by the child's health care provider or the local health department. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

			Use good hand washing. Follow proper cleaning and disinfection procedures.	
Hepatitis B	A viral infection causing liver inflammation. Stomach pain, sick feeling, fever and diarrhea. Skin and white part of eyes might turn yellow.	YES If they have: • Weeping sores that cannot be covered • A bleeding problem • Biting or scratching behavior that would lead to bleeding.	Call your child's health care provider IMMEDIATELY. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when the child can return to school. Cover all open wounds or sores. Do not share toothbrushes or pacifiers. Use standard precautions with handling blood and bodily fluids. Follow proper cleaning and disinfection procedures.	Skin lesions are dry or covered, must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection affects the body in a variety of ways. It	NO, unless There are other exclusion symptoms according to the Care Plan, weeping	Must be diagnosed and monitored by a health care provider. Children should have a Care Plan. Standard	When skin lesions are dry or covered and no other exclusion criteria present as spelled out in the Care Plan due to their immune-compromised status.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	will progressively destroy the body's immune system, causing a condition called acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Children may have unexplained fevers, failure to grow, enlarged lymph nodes, liver and spleen. They may have frequent infections.	skin lesions that cannot be covered, issues with bleeding, should not be exposed to other infections/diseases.	precautions should be followed when blood and body fluids are handled.	
Impetigo	Skin sore with a yellow, honey colored scab. It may ooze and drain. Most sores are on the face, around the nose and mouth.	YES, exclude at the end of the day if the blisters can be covered. Must be diagnosed and treated by a health care provider. If sores can't be covered exclude until treatment is started.	Must be seen and treated by a health care provider. They may give you medicine and will tell you how to take care of the sores. The child and caregivers should wash hands frequently.	Lesions/blisters need to be covered if possible. Must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before the child returns to school. Must be able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Influenza (Flu)	Fever, chills, sore throat, cough, headache, muscle aches, extreme sleepiness. Can	YES	Talk to your health care provider. Ask about over-the-counter fever/pain relievers and	A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when the child can return to school. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	develop pneumonia with influenza. May have upset stomach, vomiting or diarrhea but never without respiratory symptoms.		antiviral medicine. Get plenty of rest. All children older than six months are recommended to get an influenza vaccination every year.	
Lice (Pediculosis)	Lice (bugs) and eggs (nits) in hair and on the child's head. Mainly found on top of head, behind ears, and back of neck causing the head to itch.	NO, advise family that they should start treatment before coming back to school. If they don't treat they can still come to school. DUHS can provide a lice comb if needed.	Follow the 14-day treatment guidelines. Day 1: Use over the counter medicated shampoo and follow the all the directions on the shampoo. Day 2: Comb hair from the scalp to the end of the hair. Do not wash hair today. Day 3-9: wash hair with regular shampoo. Rinse hair. Apply conditioner to make hair slippery. Comb hair the entire length from the scalp to the end of hair. Wipe comb between each stroke	There is no need for child to be sent home from school the first day lice are found and should be allowed to return after first treatment. They will be allowed back to school even if treatment is not started. If they come to school with many live bugs on them after the family has been notified of an infestation and staff have asked the family to start treatment, the Head Start staff may ask the parent/legal guardian to comb the child's hair out before allowing them to stay in class. If the family is not compliant with this request and the child is unable to attend class without distraction, the staff may ask the family to take the child home and return after treatment is started. Drake University Head Start does not have a "no-nit" policy.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Updated 2026

			with a paper towel to remove any lice or nits. Keep hair wet while combing. Comb hair at least 15 minutes. Rinse hair. <u>Day 10:</u> Use over the counter medicated shampoo and follow the all the directions on the shampoo. <u>Day 11:</u> Comb hair from the scalp to the end of the hair. Do not wash hair today. <u>Day 12-14:</u> wash hair with regular shampoo. Rinse hair. Apply conditioner to make hair slippery. Comb hair the entire length from the scalp to the end of hair. Wipe comb between each stroke with a paper towel to remove any lice or nits. Keep hair wet while combing. Comb hair at least	
--	--	--	--	--

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

			15 minutes. Rinse hair. Ask for a copy of a Head Lice handout to help you with directions on what to do. Contact your child's health care provider for more guidance if needed.	
Measles/Rubella	Highly contagious and acute viral disease caused by the measles virus. High fever, cough, runny nose, watery eyes, and a red rash that moves from the face to the rest of body. It may last from 1-2 weeks.	YES, must be diagnosed by a health care provider.	Talk to your child's health care provider and ask about over-the-counter fever/pain relievers. Children with high fevers should be treated by a health care provider.	A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when to return to school. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Meningitis (viral or bacterial)	Fever, headache and sore neck are common symptoms in anyone over 2 years. Newborns and small infants may appear over-	YES, must be diagnosed by a health care provider	Talk to your child's health care provider IMMEDIATELY. Viral meningitis is only spread when someone has contact with an infected person's	A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when to return to school.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Updated 2026

	sleepy or inactive, be irritable, vomit or feed poorly.		stool. Bacterial meningitis can be spread through the air, so people with close contact with those that are infected may also be given medicine to prevent illness. Use good handwashing.	
MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus) and MSSA (Methicillin-Sensitive Staphylococcus Aureus)	A boil or pimple that can be swollen, red, painful and may have drainage. Often mistaken for a spider bite.	NO, unless the wound is not able to be covered.	Talk to your child's health care provider. Treat and cover all open wounds. Use good hand washing, cleaning and disinfection.	Wound must be covered or crusted over and must be able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Molluscum Contagiosum	Skin disease similar to warts.	NO, unless other exclusion criteria are met.	Do not share towels or clothing and use good hand washing	Can remain at school and follow "what to do" guidance.
Mononucleosis (Mono)	A disease caused by the Epstein-Barr virus. Child may be symptom free or have a fever, sore throat, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes, enlarged liver and spleen.	NO, unless other exclusion criteria are met.	It is spread by kissing or sharing objects contaminated with saliva. Use good hand washing. Always clean and sanitize toys after each use.	Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when the child can return to school.
Mumps	Rare in children with 2 doses of	YES, must be diagnosed by a	Talk to your child's health care provider	May return to school 5 days after the start of symptoms or until symptoms

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	measles, mumps and rubella vaccine. Fever, swollen and sore glands at the jaw. Sometimes children also have a cough and runny nose.	health care provider.	and ask about using over the counter pain/fever medicine. Give plenty of liquids.	are gone, whichever is longer. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when they return to school. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis)	Eyes are red/pink with creamy or yellow discharge and the eyelids may be matted after sleep. Eyelids and around the eyes may be red, swollen and painful.	NO, unless other exclusion criteria are met or a health care provider or public health official recommends exclusion.	Talk to your child's health care provider as they may order antibiotic drops for the child's eyes. Try to keep the child from rubbing their eyes and have them wash their hands often.	Resolution of all exclusion criteria. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Pneumonia	Inflammation of the lungs most often caused by a viral infection but may be by a bacterial infection. May have a cough, fast and difficult breathing, fever, muscle aches, loss of appetite and tiredness.	NO, unless other exclusion criteria are met.	Contact your child's health care provider. If medications are ordered, take them as prescribed. Teach children to cover their nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing with a tissue or cough or sneeze into their	Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when the child can return to school.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

			elbow. Use good handwashing and hand wash often.	
Rash Illness	Usually red, splotchy areas on the skin, sometimes with bumps that may or may not be white in color. Child may have a fever or behavioral change.	NO, unless oozing and then should be covered.	Talk to your child's health care provider if child develops a fever and acts differently with the rash.	If the wound/rash it not oozing or can be covered, must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Respiratory Illness Infection including Bronchitis, Common Cold	Cough, runny nose, watery eyes, sore throat, chills, tiredness and fever.	NO, unless other exclusion criteria are met.	Get plenty of rest. Ask health care provider about using over the counter pain or fever medicine. Use good handwashing and wash often. Seek medical treatment immediately if you see signs of difficulty breathing: * Blue or gray skin around the nose, mouth or fingernails * Struggles to breath * Makes noisy, high-pitched sounds when breathing.	If lacking energy with or without fever you should stay home. Must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication AND respiratory symptoms are mild or improving. Must be able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	May have a cough, runny nose, congestion, watery eyes, sore throat, chills and tiredness associated with the common cold.	YES	Get plenty of rest. Ask health care provider about using over the counter pain or fever medicine. Use good handwashing and wash often. Seek medical treatment immediately if you see signs of difficulty breathing: * Blue or gray skin around the nose, mouth or fingernails * Struggles to breath * Makes noisy, high-pitched sounds when breathing.	A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when to return to school.
Ringworm	Ring shaped, scaly spot on skin or head. May leave a lighter spot on skin or a flaky patch of baldness on head. May have a raised donut-shaped appearance.	NO, but must be treated before returning. May continue to exclude if not treated.	Talk to your health care provider. Ringworm is spread by direct skin-to-skin contact. Cover the area to prevent spread. Do not share personal items (combs, brushes, clothing, towels, bedding). Dry skin thoroughly after	If area can be covered and area is treated before returning to school. Treatment may take at least 4 weeks.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

			washing. Wash and disinfect bathroom surfaces, and sanitize toys daily. Use good handwashing and wash often.	
Scabies	An infestation of the skin by small insects called mites. Severe itching that can be worse at night. You may see small red bumps on the skin or burrows between fingers, on wrists or elbows, in armpits, or on waistline.	NO, advise family that they should start treatment before coming back to school.	Talk to your child's health care provider. Wash all bedding and clothing worn next to the skin during the 3 days before the start of the treatment. (use hot water and hot dry cycle)	Must start treatment before returning to school.
Serious illness, injury	Any illness or injury that would keep the child from everyday activities in the classroom.	YES, if needing to be seen by a health care provider for follow up care.	Talk to your child's health care provider. Child must be able to fully participate in all Head Start activities.	Health care provider's statement to return to school and approval of Head Start nurse. Must be able to participate fully in classroom activities. Only some accommodations will be considered to keep classrooms in ratio at all times. Report any incidents that require follow up medical care to the Health and Nutrition Manager and the Director.
Shingles (Herpes	An infection caused by the	NO, unless it cannot be covered.	Talk to your child's health care provider.	Keep rash covered at all times or if it cannot be covered, until the blisters are

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Zoster)	reactivation of the varicella-zoster (chickenpox) virus within the body of someone who previously had chickenpox or, less commonly, someone who received the chickenpox vaccine in the past. There may be red bumps and blisters, usually in a narrow area on one side of the body. The rash may be itchy or painful.		Wash hands and keep the rash covered.	crusted with no oozing scabs. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Strep Throat	Sore throat can be due to many causes. It is a severe form of a sore throat. Common symptoms include pain of the throat, hard to swallow, fever, enlarged glands and extreme tiredness.	YES	Talk to your child's health care provider. Give all medicine as directed. Antibiotics are not recommended for treatment without a positive laboratory test.	After 2 doses of antibiotic are given or on antibiotics for 24 hours. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Tuberculosis	Disease caused by an infection with the bacteria <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> that usually involves the lungs but could affect other parts of the body. A positive TB screening and a positive skin test needs further follow up with a health care provider. Cough, weight loss, fever or night sweats may be seen.	YES, if there is active (infections) TB disease.	Talk to your child's health care provider. Medications will be prescribed and must be taken as prescribed for 6-12 months.	After beginning treatment and when their health care provider and the Public Health Department allows.
Vomiting	Common causes of vomiting are sickness and upset stomach.	YES, if vomited more than two times in the past 24 hours, unless the vomiting is determined to be caused by a non-infectious condition.	Talk to your child's health care provider if fever or hives are present and call immediately if child is unable to keep fluids down for more than 24 hours.	Vomiting ends and other exclusion criteria are resolved. Must be fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities.
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	Persistent, deep-sounding cough. Some children may	YES	Talk to your child's health care provider. Give all prescribed	May return to school after 5 days of antibiotics or at least 21 days of cough if no antibiotics are given. Must be

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

	have a “whoop” sound in cough. Some may vomit or lose their breath during and after coughing.		medicine as directed. Medication may be prescribed to those in close contact to prevent illness.	fever free and able to participate fully in classroom activities. A health care provider must verify this diagnosis and when to return to school.
--	---	--	--	---

References: Head Start Program Performance Standards, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs: Caring for Our Children, Caring for Our Children-Basics, Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy Child Care Iowa/Fact Sheets; American Academy of Pediatrics, Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools 6th Ed., and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Updated 2026