

# Letter to Families

Dear Families,

## Infectious Disease

Spending time in Childcare Service's and being exposed to many children provides an opportunity for infectious diseases to be spread. In order to prevent infectious diseases being spread in our Service, we believe it's crucial that families understand how this occurs as well as how to stop them being spread.

Essentially, there are three steps to spreading infection. These are:

- The germ has a source (e.g. a person has the infection).
- The infection spreads.
- The germ infects another person.

The following things can stop infection spreading:

- Effective hand washing
- Excluding ill children and adults from our Service
- Immunisation
- Cough and sneeze etiquette
- Appropriate use of gloves (e.g. when there is a chance you may come into contact with faeces, urine, saliva, vomit or blood)
- Effective environmental cleaning

**Hand washing** is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of disease. Staff have been trained in the correct way of washing hands and also ensure that the children wash their hands in the correct method:

- Wet hands with running water.
- Use liquid soap and spread over hands.
- Rub hands vigorously for about 15 seconds, ensuring that the back of hands, palms, underneath fingernails and around wrists are washed.

- Rinse hands under running water to remove all soap suds.
- Turn tap off with a piece of paper towel
- Dry hands thoroughly with a fresh piece of paper towel.

#### **Exclusion of sick staff and children:**

While we realise that families have work and family commitments of their own exclusion periods are essential to ensure the health and safety of the ill child or staff member, and other children at the Service and staff. The length of the exclusion period will vary depending on the infection or illness concerned. For a list of these, please see our Infectious Diseases Policy or speak to an educator or the Nominated Supervisor.

#### **Immunisation**

Immunisation is the most effective way of preventing the outbreak of infectious diseases. The immunisation process enables the body to quickly recognise the relevant disease if ever exposed to it in the future, and to effectively get rid of the disease at that time. We require a copy of your child's immunisation records at enrolment. Please assist us with keeping these records up to date. If your child has not been a vaccinated, we may exclude your child during outbreaks of diseases even if your child is well.

If these preventative measures are not carried out effectively then other health and hygiene measures like safe food preparation will not stop the spread of infection. If you have any questions on this issue please do not hesitate to contact staff or speak confidentially to the Director. Our Infectious Diseases Policy contains a full list of the exclusion periods for diseases and also extensive information about immunisation. If you would like a copy of this please do not hesitate to contact staff.

#### **Sources**

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (5th Edition)*.

# Recommended minimum exclusion periods

ADAPTED FROM STAYING HEALTHY | 5TH EDITION | 2013

Condition	Exclusion of case	Exclusion of contacts <sup>a</sup>
Campylobacter infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Candidiasis (thrush)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Not excluded	Not excluded
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from the eyes has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis	Not excluded
Cryptosporidium	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Diarhoea (No organism identified)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Fungal infections of the skin or nails (e.g. ringworm, tinea)	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate antifungal treatment	Not excluded
Giardiasis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Glandular fever (mononucleosis, Epstein Bar virus [EBV] infection)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until the person has received appropriate antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice
Head lice (pediculosis)	Not excluded if effective treatment begins before the next day at the education and care service. The child does not need to be sent home immediately if head lice are detected	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received and until at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about vaccinating or treating children in the same room or group
Hepatitis B	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Not excluded	Not excluded
Herpes simplex (cold sores, fever blisters)	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission. If the person cannot comply with these practices (e.g. because they are too young), they should be excluded until the sores are dry. Sores should be covered with a dressing, where possible	Not excluded
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	Not excluded. If the person is severely immune compromised, they will be vulnerable to other people's illnesses	Not excluded
Human parvovirus B19 (fifth disease, erythema infectiosum, slapped cheek syndrome)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hydatid disease	Not excluded	Not excluded
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has started. Any sores on exposed skin should be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Listeriosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Measles	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of the rash	Immunised and immune contacts are not excluded For non-immunised contacts, contact a public health unit for specialist advice. All immunocompromised children should be excluded until 14 days after the appearance of the rash in the last case
Meningitis (viral)	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about antibiotics and/or vaccination for people who were in the same room as the case
Molluscum contagiosum	Not excluded	Not excluded
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
Norovirus	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours	Not excluded
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Exclude until 5 days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment, or for 21 days from the onset of coughing	Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about excluding non-vaccinated and incompletely vaccinated contacts, or antibiotics
Pneumococcal disease	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Rosola	Not excluded	Not excluded
Ross River virus	Not excluded	Not excluded
Rotavirus infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of the rash	Not excluded
Salmonellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Scabies	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate treatment	Not excluded
Shigellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Strepococcal sore throat (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well	Not excluded
Toxoplasmosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Tuberculosis (TB)	Exclude until medical certificate is produced from the appropriate health authority	Not excluded. Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about screening, antibiotics or specialist TB clinics
Varicella (chickenpox)	Exclude until all blisters have dried—this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise, not excluded
Viral gastroenteritis (viral diarrhoea)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours <sup>b</sup>	Not excluded
Worms	Exclude if loose bowel motions are occurring. Exclusion is not necessary if treatment has occurred	Not excluded

<sup>a</sup> The definition of 'contacts' will vary according to the disease—refer to the specific fact sheet for more information.  
<sup>b</sup> If the cause is unknown, possible exclusion for 48 hours until cause is identified. However, educators and other staff who have a food handling role should always be excluded until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 48 hours.  
 Adapted from SA Health Communicable Disease Control Branch: <http://www.dh.as.gov.au/pubs/branches/branch-communicable.htm>. Note that exclusion advice is consistent with Series of National Guidelines (SNGs) where available.

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