

# IS MY CHILD SICK ENOUGH TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL?

Courtesy of the Enid Public Schools Health Service Department

It is difficult at times to know whether or not to send a child to school when he or she complains of not feeling well. However, there are a few symptoms that definitely indicate that the child needs to remain at home:



1. Vomiting and/or diarrhea during the past 24 hours. Children should be able to eat and drink normally prior to returning to school.
2. Fever above 100° during the past 24 hours.
3. An unidentified rash.
4. Open sores (minor sores must be covered with a dressing while the child is in school).
5. Communicable diseases listed in the Communicable Disease Policy.

Though children with colds without fever are not required to stay home, parents are encouraged to keep the child at home if he/she truly does not feel well. Children who do not feel well do not learn well. They are contagious to others and are themselves more susceptible to picking up additional infections.

Children who complain of stomach aches and headaches in the morning just before school are more difficult to evaluate. First, take the child's temperature. If the temperature is normal, if the child has not been ill for the past 24 hours and if no one at home has been ill with similar symptoms, then the child can probably be sent on to school.



Avoid telling the child, "Go on to school and try it. If you still feel bad later, call me." This gives the child permission to feel bad and an excuse to come home. A more positive statement would be, "You don't have a fever and you have been OK the past 24 hours. Eat some breakfast, then go on to school and I'm sure you will feel fine." This lets the child know that you have paid attention to his complaints, and leaves him with a positive message about feeling good.