### Common Infectious Diseases in Preschoolers

**General guidelines. For more information, talk to your healthcare provider.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>Description/Symptoms</th>
<th>Incubation Period*</th>
<th>Infectious Period**</th>
<th>Prevention and Control</th>
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| Chickenpox (Varicella)      | Caused by a virus. Sudden fever, tiredness, skin rash. Rash begins as a small blister. Leaves a scab in 3-4 days. | 11-20 days         | Up to 5 days before rash appears until all skin lesions have crusted (usually 5-7 days). | Spread by direct contact with blisters, sneezing or coughing.  
  • Isolate children until lesions have crusted (5-6 days after first outbreak). People who have not had chickenpox should be considered infectious from 10-21 days following exposure.  
  • Vaccine available. |
| Cytomegalovirus (CMV)       | Caused by a virus. Often no symptoms. Most severe form occurs in fetuses and newborn babies. Very common in childcare settings. | Not known for certain. Possibly 3-12 weeks after exposure. | As long as virus is present in urine or saliva. Possibly months or years. | Spread by contact with infectious body fluids.  
  • Use proper handwashing to eliminate need for long-term exclusion from school. |
| Fifth Disease (Parvovirus)  | Common, mild viral illness. Bright red rash on cheeks. May spread to arms, legs and chest. Rash may get brighter if the body is warm. Fever in 15-30% of patients. Sometimes causes achy joints. | 4-20 days          | 1-3 days prior to onset of rash. | Primarily spread through drainage from nose and throat.  
  • Use proper handwashing. |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease | Viral illness. Fever, sore throat, sores inside the mouth, and a rash that may appear on the hands, feet, buttocks or face. This is not a disease that affects cattle. **Generally not a serious illness.** Most adults are probably immune. | 2-5 days           | During the symptoms and for several weeks after. No need to exclude child from daycare unless too sick to participate. Exclusion will not stop spread of illness. | Spread through contact with secretions from nose and throat, and from stool.  
  • Wash hands after handling body secretions.  
  • Cover nose and mouth when sneezing. |
| Impetigo                    | Bacterial skin infection with honey-crusted sores around mouth, nose, arms or legs. | 5-10 days; longer in some cases. | Until sores are completely healed or until treated with antibiotics for at least 24 hours. | Spread by contact with infected person (who may or may not have lesions).  
  • Exclude child from child care or school for at least 24 hours after appropriate therapy and child has no fever. |
| Meningitis Reportable to Community Epidemiology at (619) 515-6620. | Inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord. Often caused by bacteria or viruses. High fever and chills, stiff neck, headache, vomiting and sometimes rash, coma and seizures. | Varies according to cause. | Varies according to cause. | Spread by contact with discharge from nose and mouth or by coughing and sneezing.  
  • Use proper handwashing practices.  
  • Avoid sharing cups and tissues.  
  • Essential to see a health care provider for treatment.  
  • Vaccines available: Hib for haemophilus B meningitis; PCV 7 for pneumococcal meningitis; MPSV 4 for meningococcal meningitis. |

* Incubation Period: When illness occurs after being exposed.  
** Infectious Period: How long illness can be spread.
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<td>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</td>
<td>Caused by a bacteria. Cold-like symptoms for 1-2 weeks with a cough gradually becoming more severe. Spasms of cough with vomiting after coughing spells. Cough spells can last for 1-6 weeks or longer.</td>
<td>Usually 7 - 10 days, rarely as long as 42 days.</td>
<td>For approx. 4 - 5 weeks, during initial cold-like symptoms and up to 3 weeks after coughing spells began.</td>
<td>Easily spread by coughing, sneezing or close contact. Wash hands and cover coughs and sneezes. Appropriately dispose of used tissues. Non-infectious after 5 days of appropriate antibiotic. Vaccine available.</td>
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| Pinkeye                 | Common infection caused by bacteria or virus. Irritated, watery eyes, swollen lids and a clear or yellow discharge that makes eyelashes sticky. One or both eyes may be affected. | Viral: 12 hours-12 days Bacterial: 24-72 hours | Viral: while symptoms are present. Bacterial: until 24 hours after effective treatment has begun. | Spread by contact with discharge or with fingers or contaminated objects.  
  • Avoid touching eyes.  
  • Use proper handwashing. |
| Pinworms                | Caused by small worm in the intestine. Signs include bottom itching (rectal), especially at night. | 2-6 weeks          | Usually about 2 weeks. | Spread by transfer of pinworm eggs from rectum to mouth of another person; also by contact with objects contaminated with eggs.  
  • Wash hands, bedclothes and toys.  
  • See health care provider about treating exposed persons. |
| Ringworm                | Caused by a fungus, not a worm. Signs include small, reddish, scaly circles on body or scalp that may spread. On scalp may cause hair loss and mild to severe redness and scaling. | 4-10 days          | While lesions are present. | Spread by direct contact with infected humans, animals or soil, or indirectly by contact with contaminated combs, brushes, headgear, towels, bedding or clothing.  
  • Apply antifungal medicine to affected area and keep covered. (Some medicines are in drug stores without a prescription—ask a pharmacist.) |
| Roseola                 | Viral illness occurring most often in spring and fall. Abrupt onset of high fever for 3-7 days. The fever abates followed by the appearance of a rose-colored rash on the chest, abdomen, face and extremities that lasts from a few hours to 48 hours. | 5-15 days          | Unknown.            | No effective way to prevent. Exclude child while fever present but not necessary during the rash stage. Careful handwashing. |
| Scarlet Fever           | Caused by bacteria. “Sandpaper” rash, bright red tongue and red, swollen lips.        | 1-3 days           | Usually until person has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours. | Spread through contact with discharge from nose and mouth.  
  • Use proper handwashing.  
  • Treated with antibiotics. |
| Strep Throat            | Caused by bacteria. Infection with sore throat and fever.                              | 1-3 days           | Usually until person has been treated with antibiotics for 24 hours. | Spread the same way as scarlet fever.  
  • Use proper handwashing.  
  • Treated with antibiotics. |

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