



CFP

CARTER FAMILY PRACTICE

MODERN MEDICINE,
CLASSIC CARE

CFP CareHub Field Notes

Back to School Series



BACK TO SCHOOL

FIELD NOTE

#4

When Should My Child Stay Home?



School-year illnesses are inevitable. The hard part is deciding when a child truly needs to stay home—and when mild symptoms may be manageable at school. A few simple clues can help guide that decision.



USUALLY OKAY TO ATTEND

Monitor and send with confidence.

- ✓ Mild runny nose
- ✓ Mild cough without fever
- ✓ Seasonal allergy symptoms
- ✓ Eating and drinking normally
- ✓ Energy level close to normal
- ✓ Able to participate in usual school activities

Keep up healthy habits like handwashing, good sleep, nutrition, and hydration.



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Use your best judgment. Look at the whole child, not just one symptom.

- ✗ Worsening cough
- ✗ Significant fatigue or low energy
- ✗ Headache
- ✗ Sore throat
- ✗ Mild stomach upset or nausea
- ✗ Child says they "just don't feel right"
- ✗ Symptoms that are new and getting worse

If symptoms worsen or your child cannot fully participate in school activities, it's best to keep them home.



STAYING HOME MAY BE BEST

Your child should be able to rest and recover.

- ✗ Fever (100.4°F / 38°C or higher)
- ✗ Vomiting
- ✗ Diarrhea
- ✗ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ✗ Significant pain (ear, throat, abdomen, etc.)
- ✗ Symptoms severe enough that the child cannot participate normally
- ✗ Illness requiring frequent care or medication during the day

Follow your school's specific illness policy for return.



READY TO GO BACK?

Return-to-school guidance depends on the illness, how your child is feeling, and your school's policy.



In general, a child should be well enough to participate in normal activities without needing more care than the school can reasonably provide.

When in doubt, check with your school.



CALL YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER IF...

- ✓ Breathing is difficult
- ✓ Your child is not drinking or urinating normally
- ✓ Fever is persistent or concerning
- ✓ Symptoms are worsening instead of improving
- ✓ You are unsure whether your child needs medical evaluation



SEEK IMMEDIATE CARE OR CALL 911 IF YOUR CHILD HAS:

Trouble breathing, lips or face turning blue, severe pain, unusual sleepiness or difficulty waking, confusion, or any other symptoms that are severe or life-threatening.

Karen's Corner

Parents know their children best. Sometimes the most helpful question isn't "Does my child have a fever?" but "Can my child comfortably participate in a normal school day?" When you're unsure, look at the whole picture—and don't hesitate to reach out for guidance.

Healthy kids learn better, feel better, and thrive every day.



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS TOPIC?

Karen's Corner

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Email Karen with questions about this Field Note or suggestions for future topics.



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