

## School Health FAQs for parents.....

**My daughter just got tested for strep throat and the test was positive. She is on antibiotics.**

**When can I send her back to school?** Students may return to school after a 24 hour period of being on antibiotic treatment. Always be sure to finish the entire course of antibiotics even after you start to feel better.

**Is poison ivy contagious? Does my child need to see the doctor?** Poison ivy rash comes from contact with urushiol, a toxin found on poison ivy leaves, stems and roots. Within 12-72 hours of contact with urushiol, an intensely itchy rash may develop. The rash and its weepy drainage are not contagious. Urushiol, however, may persist on surfaces and clothing and can continue to create rashes upon contact. If your rash is very intense or widespread, or near your eyes, a visit to your doctor may be warranted. Avoid the poison ivy rash by learning to recognize the plant - "leaves of three, let it be" - which is widespread in this area.

**How do I know if my child has head lice?** Head lice is a common condition among school-age children. Lice are small, wingless insects that move very quickly through the hair. They can be very difficult to see. The egg cases, or nits, are teardrop shaped, pearly, and are "cemented" to the hair shaft close to the scalp. They do not flake off like dandruff. They most typically are located behind the ears and at the nape of the neck.

Lice FAQs

- Head lice move by crawling; they cannot fly or jump.
- Lice infestations are spread most commonly by close person-to-person contact.
- Dogs, cats, and other pets cannot catch or transmit human lice.
- Lice generally do not live without a human host for more than 24 hours.

You are not dirty if you have lice. Lice don't transmit disease. Regular inspection of children's scalps is important. Place your child near a bright light and carefully examine the hair, section by section, near the roots, looking for nits or lice. If your child has nits, assume there are lice as well. Please let the school know if your child has head lice. If you ever find lice, you may treat with a lice product found at the pharmacy. Your child will be checked for lice and nits when they return to school. Remind your child not to share hats, combs, and brushes with other children. Read [this article](#) for more information.

**Can my son take medication at school?** Per district policy, medications can be taken in school when it is medically necessary for the child to do so in order to attend school. Please contact the school nurse if this is ever the case. You will need to complete a medication permit, with doctor's signature, in order for your child to take medication at school. Please do not send in any medications with your child. All medications at school must be in the original container, and should be transported by parents and not children.

**My daughter had a tick on her. Does she need to see the doctor?** Deer ticks may carry Lyme disease in Maine. The Maine CDC (<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/lyme/>) website has information on Lyme disease, tick identification and removal. Prompt removal of ticks can reduce risk of infection. If your child has had a tick on them, you can place it in a small bottle with rubbing alcohol and take it with you if you go to the doctor's office. Wash the area with soap and water, apply antibiotic ointment and cover with a bandage. Watch for any development of a bullseye rash around the site. Any rash or fever following a tick bite needs a doctor's attention. Wearing protective clothing and using tick repellents are the best prevention of tick bites.

**My son has been diagnosed with conjunctivitis. When can I send him back to school?**

Conjunctivitis, or “pink eye” is a common childhood condition, and can be caused by mechanical irritation, viral or bacterial infection, or allergies. Pink eye may be very contagious depending upon the cause, and children may be sent home from school to see the doctor if they have bloodshot eyes , weepy or runny eyes, puffiness or itching and discomfort. If the conjunctivitis is considered contagious by the doctor, your child should be under antibiotic treatment before returning to school.

**What is impetigo?** Impetigo is a skin infection caused by staphylococcus or streptococcus bacteria. It is typically a raised sore that may become weepy and develops a tan crust. The infections may be contagious with direct contact. Impetigo should be evaluated by a physician as it may require oral antibiotics. Children with impetigo should complete 24 hours of antibiotic treatment before returning to school.

**My son broke his arm over the weekend and is in a cast. What does the school need to know?**

**My daughter had her appendix out. What does the school need to know?**

**My child has mono. What does the school need to know?**

If your child has sustained an injury, is recovering from surgery, or has an illness, and has a cast or splint, or any activity restrictions, please obtain a written note from the doctor outlining any restrictions on activity. As they recover from their injury/illness/surgery and their activity restrictions are liberalized, please obtain updated written instructions for school as needed.

Please remember that there are many health issues that affect school-age children, only a few of which are mentioned here. Ongoing questions about your child's health should be directed to your child's primary care provider.