



A GUIDE TO Common Infections

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In this booklet you will find information about communicable diseases, including signs and symptoms, how they are spread and if it's a reportable disease. If a person is infected with a disease from the Reportable Disease List, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit must be informed. Also, in this guide, is a description of some of the more common non-reportable infections that are contagious.

what is a communicable disease?

Any disease that can be spread from one person to another is considered to be a communicable or contagious disease. When a person is sick with a virus or bacteria there are only certain times that they can give the disease to others (contagious period). During this contagious time a child may be excluded from school or day care to prevent the spread of infection to others.

How is an infection spread?

Communicable diseases are illnesses that are caused by germs, which include bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi. These germs are found in body secretions, such as stool, mucus, phlegm or in tiny droplets that are breathed, coughed, or sneezed out.

Germs that cause communicable diseases are spread from person to person in different ways. Some germs are spread through the air, like influenza (flu). Others are spread by touching a person infected with the illness or by touching an object that has the germ, like giardia. Germs can also be spread through water or contaminated food, like salmonella.

How can I minimize the spread of an infection?

- Wash your hands well and often with soap or use a hand sanitizer. This is the single most important measure to prevent the spread of infection.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze with a tissue or your elbow.
- Keep your own and your children's immunizations up-to-date.
- Don't share eating utensils, lipsticks, drinking cups, etc.
- Clean and sanitize objects and surfaces (e.g., toys, counters, doorknobs, phones, etc.), with soap and warm water and/or a disinfectant.
- If you are sick don't go to daycare, school, work, or other public places.

gastrointestinal infections

Note: This guide is for information purposes only. Diagnosis of the following infections must be made by a doctor.

INFECTION	HOW IT SPREADS	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	SCHOOL EXCLUSION	REPORTABLE DISEASE
Campylobacter	Through bird, animal, or human feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water.	Fever, vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stool, abdominal cramps. Incubation period 1-10 days.	During period of diarrhea (1-4 days). If not treated up to 7 weeks.	Exclude until diarrhea is gone and symptoms free for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit.
Escherichia coli (E. coli)	Through human or animal feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water.	Mild diarrhea to blood in stool, abdominal cramps. Incubation period 2-10 days.	During period of diarrhea.	Exclude until diarrhea is gone, at the direction of the Health Unit.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection, especially for food handlers, childcare and healthcare providers.
Giardia	Through human or animal feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Common in childcare settings.	Lasting diarrhea, bloating, foul-smelling feces, fatigue, and weight loss. Sometimes no symptoms are present. Incubation period 1-4 weeks. May have watery diarrhea that alternates with soft stools or constipation.	Entire period of infection.	Exclude until treated and no diarrhea for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection, especially for food handlers, childcare, and healthcare providers.
Hepatitis A	Through human or animal feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Sudden loss of appetite, nausea, and abdominal pain or discomfort. Within a few days, jaundice occurs with yellowing of eyes and skin and darkening of urine. Note: many children do not show any symptoms, but are still contagious. Incubation period 15-40 days (average 1-2 months).	2 weeks before to 1 week after onset of jaundice.	Exclude for 1 week after onset of jaundice. On advice of Health Unit or family physician.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection.
Norwalk virus, Norwalk-like virus (viral gastroenteritis)	Through human feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache, low-grade fever. Incubation period 1-2 days.	Duration of illness. Usually 10-72 hours.	Exclude until 48 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection.
Pinworm	Eggs survive on surfaces (e.g., bed linens, towels, toys, which are transferred from contaminated hands. Transmission of eggs by hand to mouth, after touching infected surface.	Often no symptoms. If present - itching around the anus (rectum), disturbed sleep, and irritability.	As long as the female worm survives in the intestine (3 weeks to 3 months).	None.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Rotavirus (viral gastroenteritis)	Through human feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Fever and vomiting precede watery diarrhea. Dehydration may occur rapidly. Incubation period 1-3 days.	During period symptoms are present.	Exclude until 48 hours after diarrhea and vomiting have stopped.	Report outbreaks to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection.
Salmonella	Through feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Sudden onset of headache, vomiting, fever; followed by diarrhea, abdominal pain and mucus in stool. Incubation period 6-72 hours (3 days).	Throughout course of infection (which can be several days to weeks).	Exclude until diarrhea stopped and no other symptoms for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection.
Shigella	Through feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Diarrhea, fever, blood and/or mucous in stool, abdominal cramps. Incubation period 1-7 days.	From time of infection until 4 weeks after symptoms are not present.	Exclude until diarrhea stopped, at the direction of the Health Unit.	Report to Health Unit. Proper handwashing best way to prevent infection.
Yersinia	Through feces that contaminate food or water. Spread when a person swallows the contaminated food or water. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands or objects.	Watery diarrhea, cramps, fever, nausea, headaches and vomiting. Incubation period 3-10 days.	During period symptoms are present. If left untreated, 2-3 months.	Exclude until diarrhea stopped and no other symptoms for 24 hours.	Report to Health Unit.

respiratory infections

Note: This guide is for information purposes only. Diagnosis of the following infections must be made by a doctor.

INFECTION	HOW IT SPREADS	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	SCHOOL EXCLUSION	REPORTABLE DISEASE
Common cold	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, decreased appetite. Fever with some colds.	1 day before symptoms occur to 5 days after symptoms started.	Do not exclude unless too ill to take part in activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Influenza	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Sudden onset of fever, chills, headache, generalized aches and pains, loss of appetite, cough. Incubation period 1-3 days.	24-48 hours before symptoms occur to 5-7 days after symptoms started.	Exclude until well enough to participate in all activities. Usually 5-7 days.	Report to Health Unit.
Streptococcus (strep throat, scarlet fever)	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Strep Throat: Fever, sore throat, swollen glands. Scarlet Fever: May include above symptoms plus a very fine raised rash. Appears most often on neck, chest, in folds of arm pit, elbow, groin, and inner thigh. Other symptoms include fever of 38°C (101°F) or higher, chills, swollen glands.	Untreated individuals are contagious for 2-3 weeks. If treated with antibiotics, will not be contagious 24-48 hours after start of treatment.	Exclude until 24 hours after start of treatment and without fever for 24 hours.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Whooping cough (pertussis)	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects. NOTE: whooping cough is one of the most contagious diseases.	First signs are coughing and sneezing. 1-2 weeks after first signs, coughs become convulsive-like with a high-pitched gasp (called a whoop). Incubation period 6-20 days.	Very contagious from start of symptoms for 3 weeks. If treated with antibiotics, will not be contagious 5 days after start of treatment.	Exclude until 5 days after start of antibiotics or 3 weeks if no treatment is given. People in contact with infected person may need antibiotics or vaccine.	Report to Health Unit.

skin and scalp

INFECTION	HOW IT SPREADS	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	SCHOOL EXCLUSION	REPORTABLE DISEASE
Herpes Simplex (cold sores)	Contact with saliva of an infected person or items wet with infected saliva, such as kissing or sharing eating utensils.	Many infections occur without any symptoms. May cause high fever, many painful ulcers in mouth. May recur as cold sores.	Most contagious when visible sores present.	Exclude if too ill to participate in all activities. Avoid direct contact with lesions or cold sores.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Impetigo	Direct skin contact with wounds or discharges from an infected person. Can be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Pustules or crusted rash on face or exposed parts of the body (arms and/or legs).	During period symptoms are present until 24 hours after start of treatment with antibiotics.	Exclude until antibiotic treatment has been taken for 24 hours.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Ringworm	Direct skin to skin contact with infected person or animal. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Body: flat, spreading ring shaped sores. Edge of sores may be scaly and itchy. When occurs between the toes called Athletes Foot. Scalp: begins as a small, scaly patch, which spreads leaving scaly, bald patches (baldness is temporary).	When sores are present.	Exclude until seen by family physician and treatment started. Avoid contact sports until cleared by a physician to return to sports.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Scabies	By direct and prolonged skin-to-skin contact with an infected person. Can be spread by sharing contaminated clothing, towels, and bedding.	Caused by mites under the skin. They show up as a pimple-like, very itchy rash, burrows or rash of the skin, usually on fingers, elbows, armpits, and abdomen.	Until mites are destroyed by treatments. A second treatment one week after the first is often needed.	Exclude until 24 hours after first treatment is applied.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Varicella – Chickenpox	Spread person to person and via air. Very infectious. May develop following contact with a person who has shingles.	Sudden onset of mild fever. Small red pimples which develop into blisters, then become encrusted. Usually affect face, hands, neck and extremities. Incubation period 14-21 days.	1-4 days before to 5 days after rash starts.	Return to school or childcare as soon as child is well enough to participate in all activities (regardless of the state of the rash).	Report to Health Unit. Vaccine may prevent spread to contacts if used within 3-5 days from time of exposure.
Varicella – Shingles	Shingles can spread the chickenpox virus (not shingles) to a person who hasn't already had chickenpox or the vaccine through direct contact with fluid from shingles blisters.	Pain, burning, red rash with fluid-filled blisters that begins a few days after the pain, fever.	From start of blisters until blisters scab over.	None.	Not reportable to Health Unit.

other infections

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INFECTION	HOW IT SPREADS	SIGNS / SYMPTOMS	CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	SCHOOL EXCLUSION	REPORTABLE DISEASE
Fifth Disease	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Rash begins as a solid red area on cheeks (like a slapped cheek), spreading to upper arms and legs, trunk, hands, and feet. Incubation period 6-14 days.	2 days before rash appears.	Do not exclude if well enough to take part in activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit. In consultation with public health, notify pregnant teachers and parents who may have had exposure.
Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (coxsackie virus)	By breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects. This disease spreads very easily in child care settings.	Starts with fever and sore throat. Rash then develops on the palms of hands, bottom of feet and inside of mouth. Rash may look like tiny red dots or blisters.	Most contagious when symptoms are present, usually 7-10 days. Feces may be contagious up to 3 weeks after infection.	Exclude until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in daily activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Hepatitis B	Contaminated blood and bodily fluids enter a break in skin, wound, or mucus membrane. Rarely spreads in children.	No symptoms or: lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting, tiredness, abdominal pain and/or yellowing of the skin. Incubation period 2-3 months.	From weeks before onset to months or years after recovery from illness. May be infectious for life.	No exclusion required.	Report to Health Unit. Immediately report any bites that cause bleeding. Hepatitis B vaccine and/or immune globulin may be indicated for close contacts under special circumstances.
Measles (red measles)	Very contagious. Spreads by breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Fever, cough, runny nose, inflamed eyes for 1-3 days before onset of rash. Rash is large red spots, which often join together. Starts on face and spreads rapidly over body. Illness lasts 5-10 days. Incubation period 7-18 days.	4 days before rash is present, during period of illness and until 4 days after the disappearance of the rash.	Exclude until at least 4 days after onset of rash. At the direction of the Health Unit.	Report to Health Unit immediately.
Meningitis (viral or bacterial)	Spreads by breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	A severe headache, sudden high temperature, vomiting, stiff neck, drowsiness, confusion, coma. May develop a red pin-point rash.	Until treated with antibiotics (if caused by bacteria).	Remain at home until allowed to return by a physician.	Report to Health Unit immediately. Seek emergency care immediately. In some circumstances, close contacts may require antibiotics.
Mononucleosis	Contact with saliva of an infected person or items wet with infected saliva, such as kissing or sharing eating utensils.	Fever, sore throat, swollen glands, fatigue.	Can last for many months after infection.	Exclude until fever is gone and child is well enough to participate in daily activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Mumps	Spreads by breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Chills, discomfort, headache, pain below ears, fever, swelling of one or both salivary glands. Swelling is below and in front of ear. Incubation period 14-25 days.	6 days before swelling starts and for the first 9 days of swelling.	Excluded for 9 days or until the swelling is gone. At the direction of the Health Unit.	Report to Health Unit.
Roseola	Spreads by breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking.	Starts with fever. Several days later small red spots appear on face and body. Rash lasts 1-2 days. Occasionally child will have high fever. Incubation period 5-15 days.	Not highly infectious.	Exclude if child is not able to participate in daily activities.	Not reportable to Health Unit.
Rubella (german measles)	Spreads by breathing in contaminated air, from sneezing, coughing, and speaking. Can also be spread by touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.	Widespread rash, swelling of the lymph nodes behind the ear and at the base of the skull, mild coughing, sneezing, and reddened eyes. Incubation period 14-21 days.	7 days before rash appears and for the first 4 days rash is present.	Exclude for 7 days after onset of rash. At the direction of the Health Unit.	Report to Health Unit.
Pinkeye (conjunctivitis)	Direct contact with discharges from the eye of an infected person.	Redness, swelling, itching, pain, discharge from eye. After sleep the discharge forms dry, yellowish crusts on eyelashes. Incubation period 1-3 days.	During period symptoms are present, until 24 hours after start of treatment.	Exclude only if discharge is yellow and thick. Return to school or day care 24 hours after start of treatment.	Not reportable to Health Unit.

What do I do if a child has diarrhea?

Diarrhea is usually caused by one of the infections described under the gastrointestinal section (p.3). Generally, all the germs that cause diarrhea are found and spread through the feces of an infected person. These germs can spread directly from person to person and indirectly from contaminated hands of staff and children, objects, surfaces, food, or water.

Diarrhea may be dangerous in infants and young children because the loss of fluid may cause dehydration.

Children should be excluded from school until the diarrhea is gone or a doctor determines the child is not infectious.

Parents should be notified at once if any of the following are present:

- 2 or more episodes of diarrhea or diarrhea with fever over 39°C (102°F)
- Repeated vomiting
- Dehydration
- Blood or mucous in stool.

If two or more children have diarrhea in the same facility within 48 hours of each other, it must be reported to the Health Unit. Any case of bloody or diagnosed bacterial diarrhea also needs to be reported.

What do I do if a child is bitten by another?

Young children often bite. Most bites are harmless and don't break the skin. If a bite breaks the skin, it can transmit Hepatitis B. A child with Hepatitis B who bites another and breaks the skin may expose the child who was bitten to Hepatitis B infection. Another high risk situation occurs when an unvaccinated child bites an infected one, and the blood from the infected child enters the biter's mouth. If that happens, a child who is not vaccinated against Hepatitis B should be treated by a doctor. The Health Unit should also be notified.

If the skin isn't broken, clean the wound with soap and water, and apply a cold compress.

If the skin is broken:

1. Tell the parents.
2. Let the wound bleed gently.
3. Clean with soap and water.
4. Apply a mild antiseptic.

Parents should:

1. Check whether the child has an up-to-date tetanus shot.
2. Watch the wound over the next few days.
3. Visit a doctor if it gets red or begins to swell.
4. Talk with their doctor about vaccinating their child against Hepatitis B.



Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

1005 Ouellette Avenue, Windsor, ON N9A 4J8

519-258-2146 ext. 1422 or 1447

Outbreak line: 519-258-2146 ext. 1444

www.wehealthunit.org

Related Web Links

Health Canada: www.hcsg.gc.ca

Canadian Paediatric Society: www.cps.ca

notes

reportable diseases 2007/08

All diseases underlined and any respiratory infection outbreaks in a day care or long-term care facility should be reported immediately to the Medical Officer of Health by telephone 519-258-2146. (Ontario Regulations 559/91 and amendments under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.) Other diseases are to be reported by the next working day.

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS)	<u>Hepatitis, viral</u>	<u>Streptococcal infections, Group A invasive</u>
Amebiasis	1. <u>Hepatitis A</u>	Streptococcal infections, Group B neonatal
<u>Anthrax</u>	2. Hepatitis B	Streptococcus pneumoniae, invasive
<u>Botulism</u>	3. Hepatitis C	Syphilis
<u>Brucellosis</u>	4. Hepatitis D (Delta hepatitis)	Tetanus
Campylobacter enteritis	Herpes, neonatal	<u>Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy, including:</u>
Chancroid	Influenza	1. <u>Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, all types</u>
Chickenpox (Varicella)	<u>Legionellosis</u>	2. <u>Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker Syndrome</u>
Chlamydia trachomatis infections	Leprosy	3. <u>Fatal Familial Insomnia</u>
Cholera	<u>Listeriosis</u>	4. <u>Kuru</u>
<u>Cryptosporidiosis</u>	Lyme Disease	Trichinosis
<u>Cyclosporiasis</u>	Malaria	Tuberculosis
Cytomegalovirus infection, congenital	<u>Measles</u>	<u>Tularemia</u>
<u>Diphtheria</u>	<u>Meningitis, acute</u>	Typhoid Fever
<u>Encephalitis, including:</u>	1. <u>bacterial</u>	<u>Verotoxin-producing E. coli infection indicator conditions including: Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS)</u>
1. <u>Primary, viral (including West Nile Virus)</u>	2. viral	<u>West Nile Virus Illness</u>
2. Post-infectious	3. other	1. <u>West Nile Virus Fever</u>
3. Vaccine-related	<u>Meningococcal disease, invasive</u>	2. <u>West Nile Virus Neurological Manifestations</u>
4. Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis	Mumps	<u>Yellow Fever</u>
5. Unspecified	Ophthalmia neonatorum	Yersiniosis
<u>Food poisoning, all causes</u>	Paratyphoid Fever	
<u>Gastroenteritis, institutional outbreaks</u>	Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	
<u>Giardiasis</u>	<u>Plague</u>	
Gonorrhoea	<u>Poliomyelitis, acute</u>	
<u>Haemophilus influenzae b disease, invasive</u>	Psittacosis/Ornithosis	
<u>Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome</u>	<u>Q Fever</u>	
<u>Hemorrhagic fevers, including:</u>	<u>Rabies</u>	
1. Ebola virus disease	<u>Respiratory infection outbreaks in institutions</u>	
2. Lassa Fever	Rubella	
3. Marburg virus disease	Rubella, congenital syndrome	
4. Other viral causes	Salmonellosis	
	<u>SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)</u>	
	<u>Shigellosis</u>	
	<u>Smallpox</u>	

From The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

