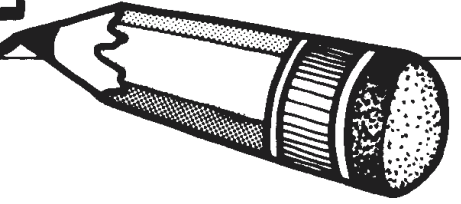


Parenting Pipeline



A newsletter for parents of kindergarten children
from Iowa State University Extension



mostly on the trunk of the body but may appear anywhere. They develop in crops (batches) every three to four days and produce tiny blisters that leave scabs. Fresh lesions may begin to appear as others scab over.

The lesions start crusting within 24 to 48 hours. Some children will just begin to heal or scab over when a new batch appears. High fever, headaches, swelling of lymph glands, severe itching and discomfort are common symptoms. Most children will have the last lesions crusted within five to 10 days after onset of the disease. A vaccine has been developed. Check with your health care provider or county public health office for details.

Your child should remain home until the last lesions are crusted to prevent passing the disease to others. The disease has an incubation period of seven to 21 days. Treatment includes:

- Apply calamine lotion, take soda baths and take an over-the-counter drug such as Benadryl for the itching.
- Pat body dry. Do not rub.
- Use acetaminophen such as Tylenol to reduce fever. DO NOT use aspirin. Aspirin use can trigger Reye's Syndrome which interferes with brain functions.
- Get plenty of bed rest and drink lots of fluids.
- Wash hands often.
- Consult health care provider if the child has a high temperature, complains of neckache, or seems confused or listless.



Cold germs are exposed to your kindergartner daily. Teach the importance of:

- Covering his mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
- Disposing of soiled tissues properly.
- Using his own glass.

Childhood Diseases

Your child's age, habits and surroundings lead to contact with a variety of germs that affect his health.

Kindergarten children can learn to fight various germs with cleanliness. You can begin to teach your child general information about communicable diseases.

"Germs are tiny, invisible creatures that make us sick. Germs travel from one person to another. Some can be washed away when we wash our hands, hair and bodies. It's important to wash after using the bathroom and before we eat. Some germs can be killed with medicine from your doctor or by getting a shot."

Prevention is the best treatment. Your child should have been immunized for protection against many childhood diseases. Keep an up-to-date record of when and where the immunizations occurred.

Chicken Pox is caused by a virus and is characterized by skin eruptions. It begins with a rash accompanied by measles-like eruptions or lesions. These skin eruptions appear

- Using soap and hot water to wash his hands after every sneeze and every time a tissue is used.

Because there is no cure for a cold, help make your child's cold as tolerable as possible. Help him get exercise, fresh air, balanced meals, fluids and lots of sleep. Avoid chilling, over-heating and dampness because they lower the body's resistance and ability to fight infections.



Impetigo is a bacterial skin infection most often seen around the lips, nose and ears, but it can be anywhere on the body. It's caused by common skin organisms carried in the nose and on the skin.

Impetigo starts as small blisters that break and crust over to become yellow-brown scabs that look like brown sugar. Impetigo is rarely serious but is highly contagious and should be treated immediately.

- It is spread by direct contact. Keep your child out of school until a health care provider has seen him and prescribed treatment. Antibiotic creams and oral medications are common.
- Avoid touching the area.
- Proper hand washing is a must.
- Avoid sharing towels and toilet articles.
- Dispose of wound dressings carefully.
- Impetigo is more common among younger children during warm weather and among the chronically ill.

Diarrhea — loose and numerous bowel movements — is embarrassing and uncomfortable to kindergartners.

- Diarrhea is caused by intestinal organisms so may be contagious.
- Thorough washing of hands after bathroom use is essential.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day.
- Missing school is necessary for your child's comfort.

Pinkeye, or conjunctivitis, is the infection or inflammation of the thin membrane that covers the eyeball and lines the inside of the eyelid. The white part of the eye becomes red and produces a mucus that is sticky and builds up. It often dries on the eyelashes at night and eyes are "stuck together" by morning.

Pinkeye is the most common eye disease in the United States and spreads easily among children and families.

- It's spread by contact with eye discharge.
- Use clean cloths each time to cleanse the eye.
- Wash hands frequently to avoid spreading the illness.
- Visit a health care provider to get prescription antibiotics.
- Keep your child at home to prevent spreading the disease. She may return according to doctor's instruction.
- Pinkeye usually clears up in 10 to 14 days, sooner with medication and prompt medical attention.

Fifth Disease most often affects children 5 to 14 years old. The mild virus is spread by coughing or sneezing.

A red rash generally begins on the face. The rash may spread to the rest of the body and may look "lacy" and itch. Heat from sun, exercise or bath water may make the rash reappear over the next two to three weeks.

There may be no other symptoms, or the rash may be accompanied by fatigue, low-grade fever, runny nose and sore throat. Non-aspirin tablets may provide comfort.

Fever indicates an infection in the body. It helps the body kill infectious organisms.

The most accurate temperature reading is taken with a rectal thermometer which reads normal temperature at 99.6 degrees Fahrenheit. The oral thermometer will probably be more acceptable to your kindergartner; 98.6 F indicates normal temperature. Digital thermometers placed in the ear are available too.

Remember, everyone has daily variations in body temperature with highs usually between 4 and 6 p.m.

Fever increases the speed at which the body works. Good nourishment is needed. Offer fluids often.

Adapted for use in Iowa from Parenting Pipeline, North Dakota State University Extension Service, by Donna K. Donald, family life field specialist, Iowa State University Extension.

This newsletter is published for families with kindergarten children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.