

# Immunization Controversy



## Vaccine Controversy

- The issue of the relationship between increase in autism and vaccinations given for measles, mumps, and rubella and diphteria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough) has caused concern among parents in both the United States and Great Britain.
- This relationship has proven to have no validity
- Vaccines rarely cause life-threatening or life changing reactions
- A child is far more at risk if they are not immunized properly
- When more children have been vaccinated with the varicella vaccine, fewer children in childcare without the vaccination actually got chicken pox
- There has been a 40 percent increase in immunizations since 1992 and now 80% of all children are immunized for diphteria, pertussis, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, and polio.
- The more children who are properly immunized the less the risk for the spread of those childhood diseases

The commonly found diseases in school are not limited to the three diseases described in this pamphlet. To learn about other commonly found diseases such as influenza, head lice, tuberculosis, etc. Please refer to the following resources for more information.



## Resources (for more information)

- *A Parent's and Educational Employees' Reference Guide for Common Communicable Diseases in School-Aged Children:* [www.messa.org](http://www.messa.org)
- *Mayo Clinic:* [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)
- *WebMd:* [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)
- *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:* [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# Contagious Diseases Most Commonly Found in Schools



- Strep Throat**
- Whooping Cough**
- Pinkeye**

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## Strep Throat

Strep Throat is caused by Group A Streptococcus bacteria and is the most common bacterial infection of the throat. Strep Throat is most common in children between ages 5-15. It is spread by person-person contact through nasal secretions of saliva.

### Contagious Period

For up to two weeks if not treated with antibiotics

### Symptoms

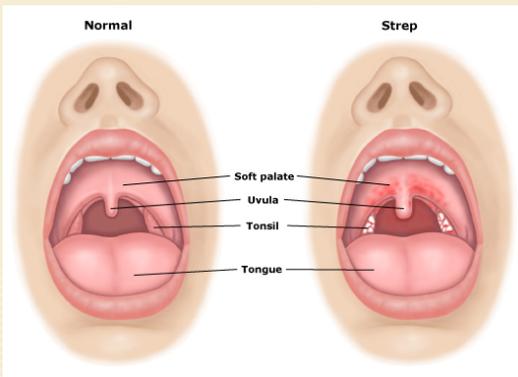
- Fever that begins suddenly and is often highest on the second day
- Sore throat
- Red throat, sometimes with white patches
- Headache
- Nausea
- Swollen lymph nodes

### Prevention/Treatment

If a strep test administered by a health care provider is positive then antibiotics must be taken. The antibiotics penicillin and amoxicillin are usually tried first, and they should be taken for 10 days even though symptoms are usually gone after a few days. Child may return to school after antibiotic treatment has begun and when child feels better.

### Contact

- health care provider/ family doctor



## Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Whooping Cough/ Pertussis is an infection in the upper respiratory system caused by the Bordetella parapertussis bacteria. It may be spread through tiny drops of fluid from nose or mouth, as well as airborne from sneezes, coughs, or laughs. It is a highly contagious as well as uncontrollable, violent coughing. Whooping Cough can affect people of any age, however it mainly affects infants younger than 6 months old and kids 11 to 18 years old.

### Symptoms

Stage 1 (symptoms are like that of a cold, last from several days to 2 weeks)

- sneezing
- diarrhea
- runny nose
- mild cough
- mild/low grade fever

Stage 2 (cold symptoms gets better, but cough is worse, last from 2 to 4 weeks or longer)

- coughing may lead to vomiting
- feeling tired
- short loss of consciousness
- difficult breathing (infants may look as if they are gasping for air with reddened face)

### Prevention/Treatment

- pertussis vaccine (DTaP immunization- 5 shots before a child is 6 years old)
- Tdap (age 11-12 boostershot and every 10 years)
- antibiotic treatment
- careful monitoring for infants (they have the highest risk of death)
- DO NOT use suppressants/ cough mixtures

### Contact

- health care provider/ family doctor
- call 911 or get to emergency room

## Pinkeye (Conjunctivitis)

Pinkeye/ Conjunctivitis is redness and swelling of the conjunctiva, the mucous membrane that lines the eyelid and eye surface. The lining of the eye is usually clear. If irritation or infection occurs, the lining becomes red and swollen. Most cases of pinkeye are caused by infections by viruses or bacteria. It also may be caused by dry eyes from lack of tears or exposure to wind and sun, chemicals, fumes, smoke, or allergies.

### Symptoms

- eye redness (hyperemia)
- swollen, red eyelids
- more tearing than usual
- an itching or burning feeling
- mild sensitivity to light (photophobia)
- drainage from the eye
- feeling as if something is in the eye (foreign-body sensation or kerato-conjunctivitis)

### Prevention/Treatment

- always wash hands
- antibiotic treatment

### Contact

- health care provider/ family doctor

