

# Exclusion periods explained

You may be asked to keep your child away from the early childhood education and care service if they are sick, or if certain diseases are present at the service. This is called 'exclusion'. The length of time you are asked to keep your child away from the service is called the 'exclusion period'.

Exclusion reduces the spread of infectious diseases. The less contact there is between people who have an infectious disease and those who don't, the less chance the disease has of spreading.

All services have exclusion policies that everyone should follow, including educators and other staff. You can ask for a copy of your service's policy on exclusion periods. If you have any questions or concerns, talk to the service or your regular doctor.

## Recommended minimum exclusion periods

A recommended minimum exclusion period is the minimum length of time your child will be asked to stay away from the service.

Exclusion and exclusion periods are different for different diseases. They depend on:



how easily the infection spreads



how long the child is likely to be infectious



how severe the disease can be.

The recommended minimum exclusion periods are in the [Staying Healthy guidelines, 6th edition](#).

### Find out more

- [Staying Healthy exclusion periods](#)
- [Immunisation](#)

## Why is my child being excluded?

To decide what to do when a child or staff member is sick, services refer to the [Staying Healthy guidelines, 6th edition](#). They may also ask the local public health unit.

Children who are sick can be excluded because of their symptoms, or because of a diagnosis. Children do not need to have a diagnosis from a doctor to be excluded.

Your child will be allowed to return to care once they meet the service's criteria. It is up to the service to decide if your child can return. You cannot use a doctor's note to ask for your child to return to care earlier than what the service has decided.

## My child is not sick, why are they being excluded?

Sometimes a person needs to be excluded because they have been in contact with someone else with a disease. This is because they may be developing the disease and may be infectious, even though they don't yet have symptoms.

Some children are at higher risk of catching a disease, so will be asked to stay away from the service if the disease occurs, even if they are well.

- Children that have not been, or cannot be, vaccinated will be excluded during outbreaks of certain vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles and whooping cough. Australia has a program of vaccinations for all Australian children (see [National Immunisation Program Schedule](#)).
- If your child is immunocompromised, they may be asked to stay away from the care service during outbreaks of certain diseases.

