

For parents and
personnel


Sønderborg

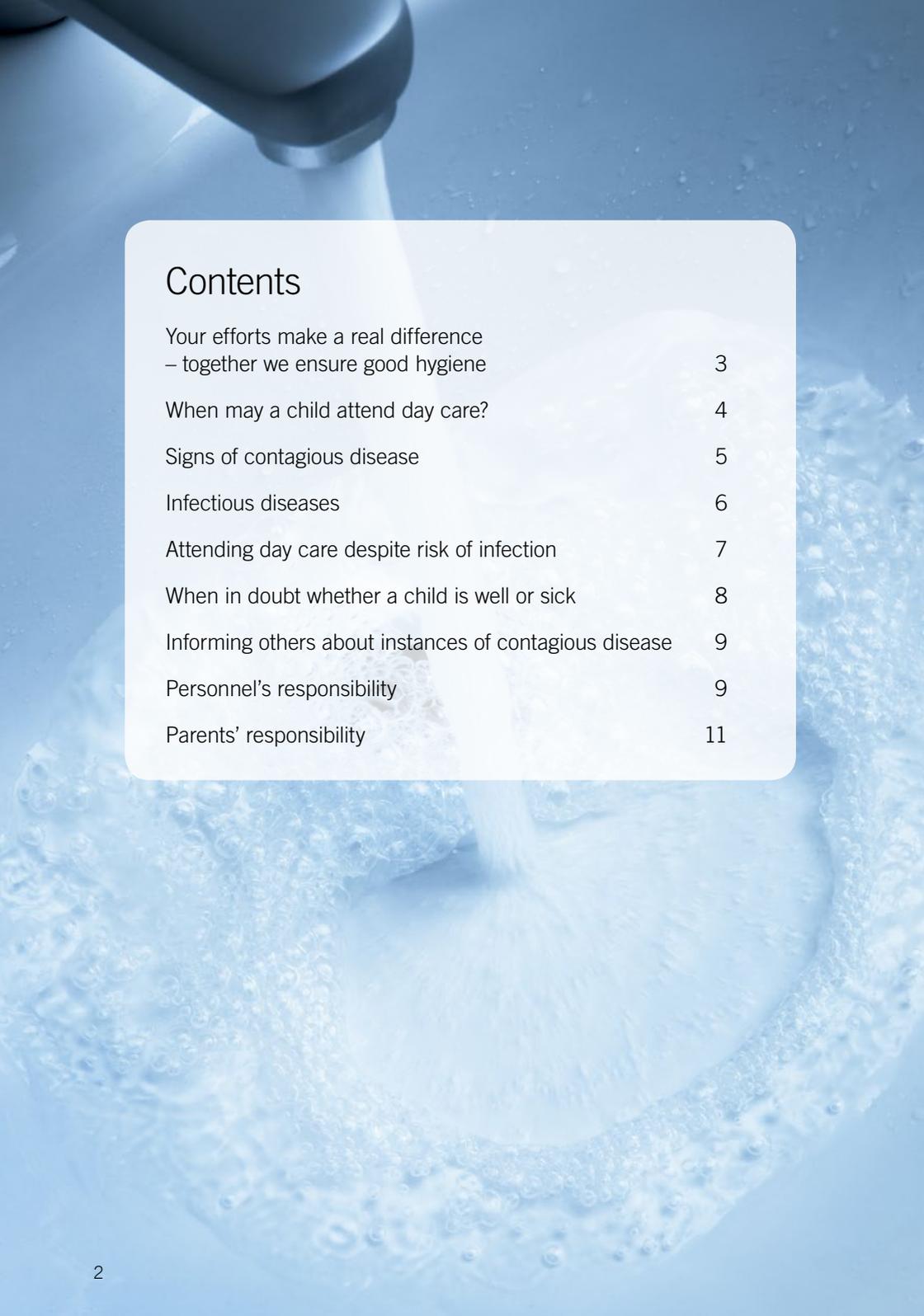
When is a child well and when is a child sick?

Hygiene guideline for parents and personnel
looking after children in day care



*Your efforts make a real
difference – together we
ensure good hygiene*



A close-up, high-angle shot of water being poured from a faucet into a sink. The water is clear and creates a large splash with many bubbles. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

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Your efforts make a real difference – together we ensure good hygiene

Introduction

When a child is sick, it is a stressful situation for both child and parents. In around 40% of cases where parents are absent from work, it is because they are caring for a sick child at home.

Often parents have a lot of questions and anxieties about knowing when their child is well again and can come back to day care (kindergarten or children's day care centre), or conversely, determining when their child is sick and must stay at home. Therefore, we have devised this guideline, which is based on the Danish Health Authority's recommendations related to **Infectious diseases in children and young adults**.

This guideline aims to promote health and well-being in day care by:

- Limiting the spread of infectious diseases in day care
- Making it easy for both parents and personnel to follow the recommendations for when a child may attend day care





When may a child attend day care?

Children easily infect one another in day care. To limit the spread of infection, it is important that sick children do not attend day care. But determining whether a child is well or sick can sometimes be difficult.

A child is well when

- The child's general condition is unaffected
- The child can participate in normal activities. The child is able to play outside and take part in excursions
- The child does not have a fever
- All of these conditions must apply – this is for the sake of the child and to minimise the risk of infection.

A child is sick when

- The child's general condition is affected, e.g. if the child is weak, whiny, restless and/or weepy
- The child **cannot** participate in normal activities
- There is a specific sign of disease, e.g. fever
- A child is sick when just one of these conditions applies – this for the sake of the child and also to minimise the risk of infection.

If a child attends day care without being completely well, there is a greater risk of the child becoming infected by another disease or of suffering complications because of a lowered resistance to other diseases. If your child has just been sick, we recommend that you keep the child at home for an extra day, so that the child fully recovers.

Signs of contagious disease

There can be many different signs that may cause someone to suspect that a child has a contagious disease:

- General symptoms
- Specific symptoms, depending on the nature of the disease
- Fever

General symptoms

A child who is on the verge of being sick, is often weak, whiny, restless and/or weepy.

Specific symptoms

In addition to general symptoms, certain diseases may have specific symptoms. For example, a cold, cough, conjunctivitis with discharge, affected breathing or a rash. Vomiting and diarrhoea are often a sign of stomach-bowel disease, but it can also be a sign of other diseases.

Fever – measuring body temperature

Day care personnel do not usually take a child's temperature but in special cases they may reach an agreement with the child's parents that they will take the child's temperature.

- A child has a fever if the child's temperature is 38.0° C or higher.
- Young children in particular are prone to fevers, and high fevers (above 39.0° C) are quite normal in children that have an infectious disease.

Infectious diseases

The most frequently occurring infectious diseases are

- Common cold
- Fever of unknown origin
- Otitis
- Bronchitis
- Pneumonia
- Childhood diseases (chickenpox, whooping cough, fifth disease, three-day fever, scarlet fever, and hand, foot and mouth disease).



However, the infectious diseases stated below require the greatest attention in day care.

- Diarrhoea
- Impetigo
- Conjunctivitis (with strong discharge, photofobia and/or affected general condition).

In the case of **diarrhoea**, the child may only return to day care after it has been observed that the child's faeces is normal.

In the case of **impetigo**, the child may only first return to day care (even when treatment has started) after the child's scabs have healed, i.e. dry and the scabs have fallen off.

In the case of **severe conjunctivitis**, the child may only return to day care at least 48 hours after treatment has started, and there is **no longer** any discharge, photofobia or the infection no longer adversely affects the child's general condition.

In the case of mild conjunctivitis with slight reddening and lacrimation of the eyes, the child is very welcome to attend day care.

The main rule is that a sick child or any sick personnel may not attend day care, and that a child with a contagious disease may only return when the child is no longer contagious.

["Smitsomme sygdomme hos børn og unge" \(Infectious diseases in children and young adults\). Chapter 8.](#)

However, there are certain exceptions to the main rule, and the definition of well and sick is not always so simple.

Attending day care despite risk of infection

With some illnesses, the child is *very welcome* to attend day care, despite risk of infection. For example this applies to:

- Fifth disease
- Hand, foot and mouth disease
- Cold sores
- Threadworm (contagious until treatment starts)
- Water warts

These diseases have mild symptoms and the child is usually not particularly affected. Some children can also be carriers.

Even though there is a moderate risk of infection, it still means that to be able to attend day care, **the child must be well** and **the child's general condition must be unaffected**.

In other cases, the child may attend day care once treatment has started, e.g.

- Head lice and scabies

If these diseases are discovered while the child is in day care, the child's parents will be informed when they come to collect their child.



When in doubt whether a child is well or sick

- Parents can contact their General Practitioner (GP).
- Personnel can contact the healthcare consultant or hygiene consultant.
- The healthcare consultant and day care personnel may not contact a GP without the parents' written consent.
- If there is continued doubt, the healthcare consultant may contact the Public Health Medical Officer, who will then decide whether the child can be seen.
- In the case of serious diseases, the Public Health Medical Officer will make the decision.



Informing others about instances of contagious disease

- The day care manager or the manager's substitute must inform all of the parents and personnel about instances of contagious disease.
- This will be done either via a notice hung up in day care, or if required via NemBarn. Notices must be visible to everyone but the child's name may not be used.
- In the case of *serious disease*, for example meningitis, the day care manager or the manager's substitute must in agreement with the Public Health Medical Officer, inform parents and personnel.
- The manager's communication shall be based on the information about the child's disease that has been provided by child's parents, and above all, on what is wrong with the child, if there is a medical assessment of this.
- In most situations, it is in everyone's best interests if the other parents and personnel are made aware that there is an occurrence of a contagious disease in day care. However, there may be very special situations where this is not the case.

Personnel's responsibility

When a child is sick in day care

If a child is sick or is suspected of being sick, and the child's general condition is affected, day care personnel are obligated to:

- Contact the child's parents so that they may take their child home as quickly as possible
- When needed, keep the child separated from the other children, but continue to supervise the child.

Medication should be administered as much as possible in the home. In the case of chronic or long-term diseases, it may be necessary for a child to take medicine several times a day.

The guidelines for the administration of medicine in nurseries, day care and schools in Sønderborg Municipality are available in ["Hygiejnebogen" \(The Hygiene Book\) on Insite.](#)

The full text on the administration of medicine is available at retsinformation.dk ([Danish law information website](#))

Hygiene precautions

The day care manager should regularly review in-house hygiene precautions and personally ensure that all of the personnel are aware of these precautions and comply with them. New personnel must be trained in the hygiene precautions.

See ["Hygiejnevejledning til personale i dagtilbud" \(Hygiene Guideline for Day Care Personnel\)](#).

When there are many instances of disease in day care

If there are many instances of disease occurring over a short period of time in day care, the day care manager should contact their immediate supervisor, who will contact the hygiene consultant.

Pay particular attention when highly infectious diseases occur, e.g. diarrhoea and impetigo. The day care manager may establish hygiene precautions, and if required, work with the hygiene consultant to devise stricter rules.

Personnel and infectious diseases

If there are infectious diseases among personnel, the same rules that apply to the children, apply to the personnel.

Some infectious diseases that commonly occur among children may carry some risk to pregnant women.

See [The Danish Working Environment Authority Guideline A.1.8.](#)

Parents' responsibility

To limit the spread of infectious diseases in day care, it is important that sick children are prevented from attending day care.

Parents should:

- Keep their sick child at home
- Respect the personnel's assessment that their child is sick/contagious when they are contacted by the personnel and informed that they must come and take their child home.
- Become acquainted with the Danish Health Authority's recommendations regarding infectious diseases.
["Oversigt over de enkelte smitsomme sygdomme" \(Overview of specific infectious diseases\). \(Chapter 8\)](#)
- Inform day care about what is wrong with their child.
- Be aware of any notices about infectious diseases and any stricter rules in special situations.
- Follow the recommendations in ["Hygiejnejledning til forældre" \(Hygiene Guideline for Parents\)](#)

If you have a suggestion for changes/improvements to this guideline, write to joel@sonderborg.dk





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