

Four Common Illnesses Spread at School

School-aged children are in close proximity to each other every day, whether in the classroom, on the school bus or during after school activities. That also means there are many opportunities where germs may spread. “Children often share equipment and school supplies, and may not always remember to wash their hands,” says David Gose, physician assistant from Bronson FastCare. “That’s when we start to see children from the same school or social groups ending up with the same illnesses.”

Here are some common illnesses that your child may pick up when around other children at school or play.

- **Impetigo**

This is a highly contagious skin infection that causes red sores on the face, neck and hands of young children and infants. It is rarer for adults to catch this condition, but it can happen if they have had another skin condition or infection recently. It is most commonly spread by skin-to-skin contact.

- **Mononucleosis**

Often called mono or kissing disease, this is a viral infection that causes flu like symptoms such as fatigue, fever, rash, body aches and swollen glands. It is most commonly spread by saliva.

- **Pink eye**

This is an inflammation or infection of the outer portion of your eyeball and inner eyelid. Some common symptoms include redness, itching and tearing of the eyes. It can also lead to discharge or crusting around the eyes. It is very easily spread by hand-to-eye contact.

- **Ringworm**

This is a highly contagious, fungal infection of the skin or scalp. Ringworm is typically scaly and may be red and itchy. You may notice that there is a darkening of your child’s skin, fissures, peeling, red rashes or scaly patches. It spreads very easily by skin-to-skin contact.

“The easiest way to prevent the spread of any germ is by practicing good hand hygiene,” says Gose. He recommends that children and adults wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Gose points out that “if there isn’t the opportunity for soap and water, an alcohol-based gel or foam hand sanitizer is the next best option.”

If your child ends up showing signs of an infection, it’s best to get him or her checked out by a health care provider at a Bronson FastCare location or with their pediatrician. The sooner it’s diagnosed and treated, the quicker your child can get back to school or play.

This article is brought to you by Bronson Children’s Hospital, southwest Michigan’s only children’s hospital. For more information about children’s health, visit bronsonhealth.com/children.

