



How to Reduce the Spread of Illnesses

How to Reduce the Spread of Illnesses through Direct or Indirect Contact

To reduce the spread of superficial skin infections, follow these hand washing and cleanliness guidelines:

- Make sure staff and children wash their hands after contact with any body fluids. Wear disposable gloves when possible.
- Use free-flowing water for hand washing, if possible. Do not use basins or stoppered sinks, which can become contaminated with the germs.
- Use liquid soap dispensers whenever possible.
- Always use disposable tissues or towels for wiping and washing.
- Never use the same tissue or towel for more than one child.
- Dispose of used tissues and paper towels in a lined, covered step can which is kept away from food and child care materials.
- Wash and disinfect toys at least daily. Wash or vacuum frequently used surfaces (tables, counters, furniture and floors) in the program daily.
- Make sure that each child has his/her own crib or mat and does not switch.
- Do not allow children to share personal items such as combs, brushes, blankets, pillows, hats or clothing.
- Store each child's dirty clothing separately in plastic bags and send it home for laundering.
- Wash and cover sores, cuts or scrapes promptly and wipe away eye discharge.
- Report rashes, sores, running eyes and severe itching to the parent(s) so they can contact their health care provider(s).

How to Reduce the Spread of Respiratory Illnesses

Hand washing and cleanliness in the program are essential. You should:

- Ensure that staff and children wash their hands after wiping or blowing noses; after contact with any fluids from nose, throat, or eye; and before preparing or eating food.
- Not allow food or eating utensils to be shared.
- Wash and disinfect any mouthed toys and frequently used surfaces (such as tables) at least once daily.
- Wash eating utensils carefully in hot, soapy water; then disinfect and air dry. Use a dishwasher whenever possible.
- Use disposable cups whenever possible; when reusable cups must be used, wash them in hot, soapy water after each use.
- Air out the facility daily, even in winter, and encourage outdoor play.
- Teach children and staff to cough or sneeze into their elbow. If they sneeze or cough into a hand or tissue, they must properly dispose of the tissue and wash their hands.
- Wipe runny noses and eyes promptly, and wash hands afterwards.
- Use disposable towels/tissues.
- Dispose of towels/tissues contaminated with fluids from nose, throat or eye in a covered container with a plastic liner. Keep them away from food and materials used in child care.
- Not kiss on the lips; instead give big hugs or kisses on the forehead.

Handout #1.2

How to Reduce the Spread of Infections through Stools

Since children and staff who have digestive illnesses don't always feel sick or have diarrhea, the best method for preventing the spread of these diseases is to have a constant prevention program (universal precautions) in place at your program. The hepatitis A virus, rotavirus, and *giardia lamblia* cysts can all survive on surfaces for periods ranging from hours to weeks.

Practice the following:

- **Strict enforcement** of all hand washing for adults and children.
- **Environmental sanitation** with focus on diapering, toileting and food preparation areas.
- **Exclusion guidelines:** Excluded children and staff may come back after treatment and when the consistency of diarrhea improves and can be contained by the diaper or pants, or with approval of the child's health provider.

How to Reduce the Spread of Diseases through Contact with Blood and Other Body Fluids

You should *treat all blood and body fluids as if they were contagious*. Always wear protective gloves when handling blood or body fluids containing blood. If gloves are not available, maintain a barrier between the blood and one's hand through the use of thick towels or gauze.

Prevention is critical! **Transmission of illnesses spread through blood is very rare in the child care setting, and illnesses such as HIV/AIDS are not spread by casual, daily contact with infected persons. However, HIV can be transmitted where there is blood contact. For example:**

- A. *Touching blood* while giving first aid with hands or body surfaces that have cuts or open sores
- B. *Collision accidents* where the skin of both people is broken and blood is exchanged
- C. *Cleaning up blood* after an accident with hands that have cuts or open sores
- D. *Biting*. The only way blood-to-blood exchange can happen through biting is for the following events to occur:
 1. There is an injury to the mouth of the biter.
 2. The bite creates a wound so serious that the skin is broken and blood flows.
 3. Blood is exchanged.
 4. One of the children involved is infected with HIV.

The infection control practices listed below should be followed for all children, whether or not they are infected with bloodborne illnesses.

- Proper hand washing
- Proper use of gloves
- Proper disposal of waste and contaminated materials such as gloves, paper towels and bandages
- Proper disinfection and cleaning with bleach solution
- Proper care of soiled clothing
- Immunization for all children and staff against Hepatitis B
- Teaching all children not to touch any blood except their own