



Biting Incidents in Childcare Settings

Biting incidents at a day nursery can be a very emotional experience for the children, parents and the day nursery staff involved, because of the small risk of transmitting blood borne diseases, such as Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, and other skin infections.

Assessment of a biting incident should involve both the bitten child, and the child biting. The child who does the biting has a higher risk of illness than the child who was bitten. The most common bites are those that do not break the skin. These bites are considered minimal risk for disease transmission. Simple contact of saliva on unbroken skin rarely causes disease transmission.

There must be an exchange of body fluids for disease transmission to occur. When a biting incident breaks the skin, the risk of transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C is still very low. Routine practices and standard wound care can reduce the risk even further. HIV and Hepatitis C do not survive well in human saliva and blood must be present for these diseases to be spread. The virus must also enter into an open cut or wound in the mouth or gums to transmit disease. Hepatitis B can be found in very weak concentrations in the saliva, and can only be transmitted through saliva or blood into broken skin.

The following are the recommended steps you should take after a biting incident occurs at your facility:

1. Provide appropriate first aid.
 - a) Wash the bite thoroughly with soap and water. If the wound is bleeding, wear gloves.
 - b) Try to rinse the mouth of the biter with water.
2. Seek appropriate medical attention as necessary.

3. If the bite has broken the skin, with or without a blood exposure, you can contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit for further direction.

- Clinical services, Sexual health program; 705 721 7520 ext. 8806
- Health Connection; 705 721 7520 ext: 8813.

Please ensure you have the following information when you call the health Unit;

- The names of the individuals involved in the incident.
 - Addresses and phone numbers of those individuals.
 - Contact information of parents/guardians.
 - Date of incident
 - Location on the body where the bite took place
 - Description of the wound
 - Hepatitis B immunization status of the individuals, if known
4. Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit will assess the incident and provide further direction to the parents and their physicians, if required.

For more information call the Communicable Disease Team at ext. 8809.