

CHILDCARE AND THE ENVIRONMENT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN	1
FOOD SAFETY	3
Important Food Safety Tips	4
SAFE WATER	11
RABIES	13
What is Rabies?	13
Rabies Prevention	13
INDOOR AIR QUALITY	18
Reduce Chemical Emissions	19
Mould	20
OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY	21
Smog	21
Vehicle Idling	22
LEARNING AND PLAY	24
PLASTICS	26
EXTREME WEATHER	28
Extreme Heat	29
Extreme Cold	32
WEST NILE VIRUS AND EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS	35
What is WNV and EEEV?	35
What Can Day Nursery Staff Do To Help Prevent WNV and EEEV?	35
PESTICIDES	37
What You Should Know About Pesticides and Your Health	37

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILDREN

Overview

Children are exposed to potentially hazardous substances everyday where they live, learn and play. Children are particularly vulnerable to some environmental contaminants because they are still growing and developing.

The behaviour and physiology of children and adults differs. By comparison, children breathe, eat and drink more than an adult. Childhood behaviours such as mouthing and crawling can increase exposure to potential contaminants on some toys and on surfaces like floors and walls.

Cleaning, tidying and paying careful attention to various items within a child's environment can help reduce the risk of exposure to environmental contaminants and protect their health.

Children learn and play in a variety of environments –both indoors and outdoors. It is important to understand the providing a safe and contaminant free environment is not strictly limited to chemicals. The natural environment must also be considered. Extreme weather, outdoor air quality and access to safe water and food are all important environmental issues to consider when providing a healthy environment for children.

General Child Care and the Environment Resources

Pamphlets

- [Health Canada: Healthy Environments for Children: What You Can Do!](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
(www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- [Health Canada: Hazardcheck – Hazards in your environment](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
(www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- [Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health](http://www.beststart.org)
(www.beststart.org)
- [Playing it Safe: Childproofing for Environmental Health](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
(www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

Books

- [Child Health and the Environment - A Primer](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
(www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- [Playing it Safe - Service Provider Strategies to Reduce Environmental Risks to Preconception, Prenatal and Child Health](http://www.cela.ca)
(www.cela.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Thunder Bay District Health Unit – Children’s Environmental Health](http://www.tbdhu.com)
(www.tbdhu.com)
- [Health Canada](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) ([/www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca))

FOOD SAFETY

Food safety and the prevention of food borne illness is especially important in a day nursery setting because young children are considered at higher risk of complications due to illness that can be spread through contaminated food or water. This is due to their under-developed immune system which does not have the ability to fight infections as efficiently as a healthy adult.

Day Nurseries that prepare and handle food on-site are considered “food premises” under the Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O. 1990, Chapter H7 and, as such, they must meet the requirements of the Ontario Food Premises Regulation, 562 R.R.O. 1990. This regulation addresses the necessary components to ensuring food safety such as, but not limited to: physical equipment and building requirements, food and food storage temperatures, sanitation, approved food sources, personnel, and maintenance.

Make Food Safety a Priority in Your Day Nursery Centre!

It is strongly recommended that day nursery food handlers and supervisors be properly trained and certified in safe food handling procedures. Speak with your area Public Health Inspector or call *Your Health Connection* at 1-877-721-7520 to receive current information regarding the availability of upcoming Food Handler Training and Certification courses and examinations.

Physical Requirements

The Food Premises Regulation outlines specific building and equipment requirements that are necessary for ensuring food safety. These include:

- Adequate mechanical ventilation where required (washrooms, cooking equipment);
- Adequate protection against the entrance of insects, vermin, rodents, dust and fumes;
- A potable water supply that is considered safe for drinking. Water may be from a municipal or private (well) water source;
- Food contact surfaces and non-food contact surfaces must be properly designed, constructed, installed, located and be smooth, non-absorbent and easy to clean;
- At least one separate hand wash basin with the required supplies – hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towel from a dispenser. This hand basin must be separate from the 2 or 3 compartment dishwashing sink and must not be used for anything other than handwashing;
- A three compartment sink or a commercial mechanical dishwasher if multi-service articles are used such as, cutlery, plates, bowls, cups and glasses; and
- A two compartment sink if the childcare centre is using a commercial mechanical dishwasher or is preparing food on-site but is using disposable, single service articles such as, cutlery, plates, bowls, cups and glasses.

Important Food Safety Tips

Food from an Inspected Source

All foods served to children at day nurseries, should come from an inspected source. An **“inspected source”** is a food premise that is routinely inspected by the local Health Unit (i.e. grocery store, bakery, caterer, restaurant, etc.). Foods that are prepared at homes of parents and staff should NOT be served to the children. The only exception is made when parents provide food for their own child (i.e. bagged lunches).

If parents and/or staff wish to provide food for special functions (i.e. birthday parties, etc.), the food should come from an inspected source and must be properly packaged (i.e. showing ingredient list, best before date, etc.). A log book should be maintained, recording information such as:

- The type of food brought in
- Where the food was purchased
- Name of the person who brought the food
- The date the food was brought in and served

Parents and/or staff should never prepare food at home for the children at the centre.

Ideas for Birthday Parties

- Make arrangements to provide simple cakes baked at the centre
- Offer a service that provides cakes from an approved grocery/bakery

Cold-Holding

Maintain frozen foods at or below -18C (0 F) at all times. Provide an accurate indicator thermometer for each freezer compartment and monitor and record the temperature of these units at the beginning and end of each day on a temperature log (see resources section for sample log sheet).

Thaw frozen meat, poultry and fish in the refrigerator under cold running water or in the microwave and cooked immediately thereafter. Never thaw hazardous foods like meat, poultry or fish at room temperatures.

Keep hazardous foods like meats, poultry, eggs, fish, cheese and other dairy products refrigerated at 4 C (40 F) or colder until they are ready to be cooked or served. Provide an accurate indicating thermometer in each refrigerated compartment (i.e. fridge and/or freezer) and have your food handler monitor and record the temperature of these units at the beginning of each day to ensure that they are operating properly (see resources section for sample log sheet).

If refrigeration units require repair, remove all hazardous foods to an alternate cold storage compartment until the original unit can be verified (with an accurate thermometer) as being capable of holding foods at the required safe temperatures.

Remember that foods that were held at improper temperature in the danger zone while the fridge was not working will need to be discarded. If in doubt, throw it out!

Food Preparation

Minimize the time that any hazardous foods are left at room temperature during preparation. When preparing large amounts of food, prepare it in smaller “batches”, keeping the remainder cold in the refrigerator or freezer until needed.

Prevent “cross-contamination” from raw foods (e.g. raw meat, poultry, eggs and fish) to cooked or ready-to-eat foods (e.g. deli meats, cheeses and other dairy products, salads or desserts) at all times during storage, preparation, cooking and service.

Store frozen, thawing or raw meats, poultry, fish and eggs below and away from cooked or ready-to-eat foods in the freezer and refrigerator.

Prepare raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods. Use completely separate food contact surfaces (e.g. cutting boards, preparation tables, plates and other utensils), or prepare raw and cooked items at separate times only after thoroughly cleaning, rinsing and sanitizing all surfaces between uses – particularly after working with raw foods! Equipment and surfaces must be sanitized with a chlorine bleach solution, quaternary ammonium product or other product approved by public health. Licensed centres should review their food grade disinfectants with their local public health inspector.

Cooking

Cook all foods rapidly to at least their minimum required cooking temperature prior to service. See Table 1 for list of cooking temperatures.

Provide your food handlers with accurate probe thermometers and a supply of temperature log forms so that they can monitor and record the actual final internal temperature of hazardous food items they, cook, cold-hold and hot-hold and/or reheat each day (see resource section for sample HACCP tracking sheets). Probe thermometers must be cleaned and sanitized between each use, and should also be checked for accuracy at least weekly. For more information on how to calibrate, and sanitize your thermometer, contact your public health inspector.

(Table 1)

All minimum internal temperatures must be reached for at least 15 seconds		
Poultry (chicken and turkey) Whole	82 C	180 F
Parts of poultry	74 C	165 F
Ground poultry	74 C	165 F
Pork (including ground)	71 C	160 F
Fish	70 C	158 F
Ground Beef	71 C	160 F
Mixtures containing poultry, eggs, meat or fish	74 C	165 F
All other hazardous foods (e.g. rice, gravy)	70 C	158 F
Eggs	63 C	145 F

If the centre is being catered, internal food temperatures must be taken upon arrival at the centre and recorded on a log sheet. All hot foods should be at least 60 C (140 F) or hotter and cold foods should be 4 C (40 F) or colder. If food is delivered in the danger zone, it should not be accepted by the childcare centre. There should be a back up plan in place in the event that food needs to be prepared on site.

Food Service

Once prepared, keep cold foods cold at 4 C (40 F) or colder and hot foods hot at 60 C (140 F) or higher until served. Always use clean serving utensils and, to minimize the potential for contamination of foods served, do not allow children to serve themselves or share. Once food has been served to children or staff any leftovers should be discarded.

Milk is a particularly fragile hazardous food item. In accordance with the Ontario Food Premises regulation, pasteurized milk must always be served from its original container (i.e. cartons or bags). If a separate covered container (that is clean and sanitized) is used to serve milk, any leftover milk must be discarded after a single service.

For more information on food safety contact your public health inspector or visit our website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Personal Hygiene

Food handlers play an important role in food safety. Good personal hygiene practices are key in preventing cross contamination food and preventing food borne illness.

Food handlers must wear clean outer garments and headgear that confines the hair any time they are handling or preparing food. Staff only involved in the service of prepared food are not required to wear headgear.

Food handlers must not work within 24 hours of experiencing any enteric symptoms (e.g. nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps or chills).

Staff preparing food at the centre should not be diapering or assisting children with toileting.

Any person with a skin disease “may not perform any work that brings him or her into contact with food unless he/she has obtained the approval of the local Medical Officer of Health (Health Unit) in writing (O.Reg 562 as amended, R.R.O. 1990).”

Good hand hygiene is important for preventing contamination of food. Gloves are not a substitute for handwashing. Gloves can provide a protective barrier against germs that cause infection but offer little protection beyond what is achieved through good handwashing. Gloves are not recommended for food handlers unless there is a cut or open sores on the hands.

The designated hand wash sink must always be supplied with hot and cold running water and liquid soap and paper towel in a dispenser. The sink must be accessible at all times for handwashing and should not be used for any other purpose.

Food handlers and staff serving foods must carefully and thoroughly wash their hands using the 6-step handwashing procedure:

- Before and after handling any foods or food contact utensils
- After going to the washroom
- After coughing or sneezing into their hand or blowing their nose
- After wiping noses or cleaning up any blood, vomitus or other body fluids
- After participating in outdoor activities
- After cleaning and sanitizing procedures
- After handling chemicals
- After diapering or toileting
- After handling raw hazardous food or an allergen and before handling ready to eat foods
- After handling garbage and cleaning products or equipment
- After handling classroom pets, pet food and their equipment or litter
- Any cuts or abrasions should be bandaged and covered by disposable gloves
- And any other time their hands may have become soiled
- For more information on Hand Hygiene – see the chapter on Infection Prevention and Control 2-4 to 2-8.

Food Allergens

Allergic reactions happen when the body's immune system reacts to a particular protein or irritant. The reaction may be caused by food, insect stings, and medications. When someone comes in contact with an allergen, symptoms may develop quickly and have the potential to progress rapidly from a mild reaction to a severe one. A person/child experiencing an allergic reaction may have any of the following symptoms:

- Trouble breathing, speaking, or swallowing
- A drop in blood pressure, rapid heart beat, and/or loss of consciousness
- Flushed face, hives or a rash, or red and itchy skin
- Swelling of the eyes, face, lips, throat, and tongue
- Anxiousness, distress, faintness, paleness, sense of doom, and/or weakness
- Cramps, diarrhea, and/or vomiting

In Canada, there are nine priority food allergens (substances which cause allergies):

- peanuts
- tree nuts (almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts [filberts], macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts [pignolias], pistachio nuts, and walnuts)
- sesame seeds
- milk
- eggs
- fish (including shellfish and crustaceans)
- soy
- wheat
- sulphites
- **Mustard** is now a priority allergen in Canada, and labelling **requirements for mustard will come into force on August 04, 2012.**

Trace amounts of these foods can potentially be found in a wide range of food products including snack foods, health foods, baked goods, seasonings, and many other foods. Be sure to review ingredient lists of manufactured food products prior to use.

Food handlers should take the following control to ensure that food contaminated with an allergen is not inadvertently served to children with an allergy:

- Have food product ingredients list readily available. If unsure about the ingredients, call the manufacturer or do not serve to the children.

- During registration of a child ask parents to notify the centre of any food allergies.
- ENSURE REGULAR HANDWASHING.
- Clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces and utensils to prevent cross contamination.
- Educate staff. Have policies in place on how to recognize and respond to an allergic reaction – immediately call 911 if you suspect a child is having an anaphylactic reaction!

List of Useful Food Safety Resources

Pamphlets

- Food Safety Tips for Packed Lunches
- Handle Food Safely Brochure

Fact Sheets (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

- [Food Handler Training](#)
- [Food Safety During a Power Outage](#)
- [Cooking Temperature Chart](#)
- [Handwashing](#)
- [Cook](#)
- [Clean](#)
- [Separate](#)
- [Chill](#)

Decals (Note: Can be ordered through *Your Health Connection* 705-721-7520, not available on the web)

- [3 Sink Dishwashing](#)
- [2 Sink Dishwashing](#)
- [Freezer temperature](#)
- [Refrigerator temperature](#)
- [Hot-holding temperature](#)
- [Handwashing](#)

Forms (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

- [Refrigeration Temperature Log](#)
- [Hot Holding Food Temperature Log](#)
- [Food Temperature Log](#)
- [Cooling Temperature Time Graph](#)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [E-Laws](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca) (www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) (www.inspection.gc.ca)
- [FightBac – Partnership for Food Safety Education](http://www.fightbac.org) (www.fightbac.org)
- [Health Canada](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index_e.html)

SAFE WATER

All day nursery facilities must have a constant supply of potable water in order to operate safely when serving food, washing hands, drinking and during water play.

Water Systems

Day nurseries served by municipal water supply systems have their water monitored, tested and treated on a constant basis in accordance with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) regulations.

A day nursery that has its own private water supply is classified as a Designated Facility and is required to conform to Ontario Regulation 170 (under the Safe Drinking Water Act). This regulation requires that all private water works operators put in place a system of water testing and treatment that will ensure a potable water supply. The regulation is enforced by the MOE.

Flushing and Sampling for Lead

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 243/07 administered by the Ministry of Environment, schools, private schools and day nurseries must periodically test their drinking water for lead content and report all adverse test results.

For detailed information about your obligations please refer to the Ministry of Environment website at www.ene.gov.on.ca or call the local office of the MOE at 705-739-6441.

Boil Water Orders/Advisories

Boil Water or Drinking Water orders or advisories can be issued by the medical officer of health or by a public health inspector to any day nursery on a private or municipal water supply. When an order or advisory is issued we will contact your facility. The inspector will provide you with advice and direction about precautions to implement and the actions required in order to remove the order or advisory. A public health inspector will also visit your facility. All day nurseries should have in place a response plan in the event that an order or advisory is issued. The plan should include measures to ensure a safe water supply is available to children and staff in the facility. Bottled water and/or an alternative potable municipal supply of water may be required for a period of time. In some circumstances, your facility may have to be closed until potable water is available. Your area public health inspector can provide assistance in developing your contingency plans.

Recreational Water Illnesses

Recreational water illnesses can occur in children from swimming at the local beach, wading pool, swimming pool or even splash pads. These illnesses are caused by germs such as Cryptosporidium, Giardia, pathogenic E. coli, Shigella and others. A child may accidentally swallow water that has been contaminated with faecal matter. Even properly maintained pools can spread illness, as some of these germs are resistant to chlorine.

Childcare and the Environment

Below are six “PLEASES” to promote healthy swimming:

- PLEASE don't swim when you have diarrhea. This is especially important for kids in diapers. You can spread germs into the water and make other people sick.
- PLEASE don't swallow pool water or lake water and try to avoid getting any water in your mouth.
- PLEASE wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- PLEASE take your kids on bathroom breaks often. Waiting to hear “I have to go” may mean it's too late.
- PLEASE change diapers in a bathroom and not poolside.
- PLEASE clean your child thoroughly (especially his or her bottom) with soap and water before swimming. We all have invisible amounts of fecal matter on our bottoms that end up in the pool.

For more information refer to *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* at www.cdc.gov.

Child care facilities are to only use swimming pools that are inspected and that meet the requirements of the Public Pools Regulation. Private home pools are not to be used by children in your care.

Beach Monitoring

Each week throughout the summer, waters at designated beaches throughout the County and District are sampled. Results are assessed by inspectors and when provincial guidelines are exceeded or other risk factors are present the recommendation for sign posting is made as there may be an increased risk to swimmers. Beaches may also be closed if more serious conditions are present. This monitoring program may be viewed on our website www.simcoemuskokahealth.org during the swimming season.

At certain times there may be an increased risk for children acquiring illness from our beaches. When a beach has a heavy population of birds their droppings increase the bacteria levels, or a heavy rain or wind can make the water turbid and raise bacterial levels. When these conditions occur, you should consider waiting until they subside.

List of Useful Safe Water Resources

Fact Sheet

- [Swimmer's Itch](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Ministry of the Environment](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment) (www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment)

RABIES

What is Rabies?

Rabies is a fatal disease caused by a virus that affects warm blooded animals, including humans. Once symptoms appear, rabies is almost always fatal. The virus can be transmitted through an animal's bite, scratch or through contact with its saliva (i.e. if the saliva enters the body through an open cut or sore).

Rabies Prevention

Avoid Wild Animals

In Ontario, the most common animals that carry the rabies virus are bats, raccoons, skunks and foxes. Animals such as cats, dogs and cattle can also get rabies if they are exposed to an animal that is infected with rabies. Warn children to stay away from wild animals such as foxes, skunks and bats. These animals could be carrying the virus even though they look healthy.

Avoid animals you do not know

Warn children to stay away from animals they do not know. Just because an animal looks friendly does not mean it is okay to approach it or pet it.

Avoid sick or dead animals

Rabid animals change their behaviour. They may become either very aggressive or very passive. Avoid all animals who are acting strange, even your own pet. Do not touch dead animals!

If a bat is found inside the day nursery or in the playground area, approach with caution. If the bat can be captured safely use heavy gloves to protect from any bites or scratches. If you feel the bat cannot be caught properly call animal control. All bat incidents should be reported to public health to assess whether anyone may have been exposed to the bat. Public health will arrange for the bat to be picked up and submitted for testing through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Report Bites or Scratches

Report any animal contact incident to the health unit. Include as much information as you can about the animal and if known, the owner's name, address and phone number. Public health inspectors will use this information to contact the owner, check rabies vaccination certificates and decide what other actions are needed. Call Your Health Connection to speak to a Public Health Inspector at 721-7520 x 8811 (1-877-721-7520) when animal contact incidents occur. This is particularly important when incidents involve stray, unknown or wild animals. Rabies post exposure treatment can be administered by a physician but this must be done as soon as possible after any contact with a suspected or confirmed rabid animal so humans can be protected.

Report Sick Animals

If you see a sick animal, contact your local animal control agency. Animal control officers can safely handle and transport sick pets and wild animals. In the event of an urgent or threatening situation, you may need to contact the police. Please refer to the reference pages of this chapter for a list of local Animal Control phone numbers.

Vaccinate Animals

Any cat or dog over 3 months of age must be vaccinated for protection against rabies. Day nurseries should ensure any dog or cat visiting their facility is vaccinated against rabies. Wildlife should not be brought in to a day nursery setting.

List of Useful Rabies Resources

Fact Sheets

- [Rabies](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- Bat Rabies (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Raccoon Rabies](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca) (www.mnr.gov.on.ca)

Pamphlets

- [Effective Control of Bats](http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca) (www.pmra-arla.gc.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (www.mnr.gov.on.ca)
- [Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care](http://www.health.gov.on.ca) (www.health.gov.on.ca)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) (www.inspection.gc.ca)

Animal Control Phone Numbers

SIMCOE COUNTY

Adjala-Tosorontio (Canine Control)	905-936-4649
Barrie Animal Control	705-739-4241
Bradford West Gwillimbury- Kennel Inn Inc	905-727-4646
kiicomplaints@gmail.com	
Clearview Township Canine Control.....	705-428-6230
Collingwood Animal Control – Animal Control Officer	705-445-1030 x3254
Essa Township Animal Control (canine only)	705-424-9770 ext 122
(After hrs)	1-888-624-6455
Innisfil Canine Control	705-424-9917 x12
Huronian Animal Control (Midland, Penetanguishene, and Tiny).....	705- 549-2289
New Tecumseth Canine Control.....	905-729-4972
Oro-Medonte Canine Control	705-487-2171
Springwater Animal Control.....	1-800-737-2064
Tay Township (Care Animal and Pest Control).....	705-534-7248
Wasaga Beach Animal Control.....	705-429-2511

Animal Control Phone Numbers

DISTRICT OF MUSKOKA

Town of Bracebridge (Canine Only)	705-645-5264 Ext. 250 or Ext. 252
Georgian Bay Township (Canine Only)	705-538-2337
Town of Gravenhurst (Stray Dogs, Dogs running at large)	705-687-3412 Ext. 228
(Note: Animal Control has been contracted out to Orillia OSPCA	705-325-1304)
Town of Huntsville	705-789-1751 Ext. 2231
Lake of Bays Township	705-635-2272 Ext. 243
Muskoka Lakes Township (Canine Only)	705-765-3156 Ext. 241

Forms

SMDHU Animal Incident Reporting Form



Rabies and Animal Exposure Incident Report

Report all animal exposure incidents to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and fax a copy of this form to the Health Protection Service.
OFFICE HOURS: Mon - Fri 8:30 am – 4:30 pm CALL: 705 721-7520 FAX: 705 721-1495
AFTER HOURS, WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS: CALL: 1 888 225-7851
 Contact the health unit for urgent consultation regarding a suspicious animal exposure incident or for release of rabies post-exposure treatment pharmaceuticals.

Please fill out as much information as possible to allow proper response by the health unit.

(A) REPORTED BY:

Date Reported: _____ Person Reporting: _____
 Treatment Centre/Hospital/Office: _____
 Phone: _____ Extension: _____ Date of Incident: _____
 Details As To How Incident Occurred: _____

(B) PATIENT/VICTIM INFORMATION:

Name: Mr/Ms/Mrs _____ Male Female
 Date of Birth: _____ Phone: home: _____ bus: _____ cell: _____
 Address: (permanent) _____
 (temporary) _____
If patient/victim is not a permanent resident of the area, please ask the length of time they will be in the area.
 Body area affected: _____ Bite Scratch Saliva Handling Other:
 Skin broken: Yes No Provoked: Yes No
 Family Physician: _____ Phone: _____
 Additional Information: _____

(C) ANIMAL OWNER INFORMATION (or person with custody of animal):

Owner: _____ Phone: home: _____ bus _____
 Address: (permanent) _____
 (temporary) _____
If owner is not a permanent resident of the area, please ask the length of time they will be in the area.
 Animal Species: Dog Cat Bat Other
 Breed: _____ Colour: _____ Current rabies vaccination: Yes No Unknown
 Where is animal located now? _____

PLEASE FAX THE COMPLETED COPY OF THIS FORM TO THE SIMCOE MUSKOKA DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT: FAX 705-721-1495

This personal information is collected under the authority of the Health and Protection and Promotion Act (1990) Reg. 557 Sec. 2. It will be used to conduct investigations and for the purposes of monitoring and surveillance of rabies activity. For further details concerning this collection, contact the Freedom of Information Coordinator at 705 721-7520.

Revised July, 2006

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Children spend a lot of their time indoors. Contaminants can be tracked indoors or may originate from sources within the facility. Most of these substances end up in indoor air and dust on surfaces. Levels of these contaminants can be higher indoors compared to outdoors since the areas inside are much smaller compared to those outside. To help reduce a child's exposure to potential contaminants while they are indoors here are some things to consider.

- Wet mop or vacuum instead of dry dusting
- Dispose vacuum bags and dryer lint safely
- Washing hands with plain soap and water often to remove contaminants; reduce the use of antimicrobial soaps
- Eliminate the use of perfumes and scented products; refrain from using deodorizers or air “fresheners”
- Remove outdoor shoes at the door
- Avoid the use of aerosol sprays, when possible
- Maintain and clean heating and ventilation systems
- Ensure mould issues are addressed
- Use cleaning and sanitizing products that are most effective for the task and the least toxic
- Test for radon and take measures to reduce levels as necessary

Reduce Chemical Emissions

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

VOCs are chemical compounds emitted from various solids and liquids in a gaseous form which can effect the environment and our health.

- Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can be released into the air following the use of cleaners, paints, glues or air fresheners. It is important to reduce or eliminate products or materials where VOCs can be released. Choose low VOC, non-toxic or environmentally friendly items.
- Chemicals can also be release following renovation projects such as painting or the replacement of carpets within a childcare center. Paints and new carpets can “off-gas.” Proper ventilation will help remove harmful VOCs that could be present. If considering a renovation project within your facility, make environmentally friendly choices. Area rugs can be a great alternative to installed carpet.
- Adequate ventilation is important for providing clean air for children to breathe. This is important during renovation activities, while using cleaning products or following arts and crafts. When appropriate, opening windows to allow air to circulate throughout your facility can help limit the amount of contaminants present.

Fragrances

Many scented products can cause health problems for those suffering from allergies or asthma. For sensitive individuals, they may experience:

- Wheezing, shortness of breath
- Headaches, migraines
- Dizziness, lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Asthmatic episodes

To help reduce the risk to children or sensitive adults consider:

- Development of a scent or fragrance free policy
- Avoid air fresheners, scented household cleaners
- Provide information to parents about fragrance free products

It is important to understand the difference between scent and fragrance free. Scent free products may have compounds in them which “mask” the smell where as fragrance free products often are free of fragrances. Unscented products are a good choice.

Mould

Mould is a common term for fungi that grow on damp building materials or food. It can be found everywhere and will spread when spores are released into the air. Mould can cause discolouration of surfaces and materials. Mould can be any colour.

Many activities or events could contribute to mould growth:

- Spills that are not cleaned up
- Leaky pipes
- Excess condensation (ie. from cooking, laundry machines) – ensure fans or other exhaust devices are working properly
- Increased humidity – Relative humidity (RH) is a measure of the amount of water vapour or moisture present in your air, as a rule of thumb RH in indoor air should be no more than 30-50%.

Not all moulds cause illness. However, when spores are released in the air, they can be breathed in and may trigger breathing or respiratory problems. Most often you may see eye, nose and throat irritation. Mould can also trigger asthmatic episodes.

The presence of mould indicates a moisture problem. Sometimes mould cannot be seen but a “musty” smell will be present. It is important to find out where the problem originates and repair it. If mould is present – remove it.

For more information visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

List of Useful Indoor Air Quality Resources

Fact Sheets (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

- [Mould](#)
- [Cleaning up after a flood](#)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca)
- [It's Your Health - Dampness, Mould and Indoor Air](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- [Health Canada: Environmental and Workplace Health -VOCs](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY

Smog

The word smog is a combination of the words smoke and fog. Smog is the most visible form of air pollution. It is a brownish-yellow hazy cloud caused when heat and sunlight react with various pollutants emitted from industry, cars, pesticides and oil based home products. Smog is a year-round problem but most smog watches and alerts occur on hot days usually between May and September.

Children are more likely than adults to experience respiratory effects of smog such as wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath because:

- Children breathe in more air than adults and they breathe faster than adults especially during strenuous activity and play.
- Children tend to breathe through their mouths and by-pass the natural filtering system in the nose. This allows large amounts of polluted air to get directly into their lungs.
- Children spend more time outside than adults.
- Smog increases a child's risk of getting sick. Children are more susceptible to infections than adults, smog reduces the respiratory system's ability to fight infection and remove foreign particles.
- Smog can make the symptoms of childhood asthma and allergies worse.
- Studies show that children's exposure to air pollution can lead to decreased lung function as an adult.

Precautions for Smog Days

The Ministry of the Environment has a *Smog Alert Program* and will issue smog alerts if air quality reaches the "poor AQI (air quality index) category." For more information and to sign up for alerts go to: http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/subject/air_quality/index.htm and click on *Smog Alert Program*.

During days where air quality is poor or a smog alert has been issued:

- Avoid strenuous exercise and limit outdoor activity where possible
- Reschedule or plan outdoor activities for early in the morning or late in the day when pollutant levels are lower
- Stay away from high traffic areas to reduce exposure to vehicle exhaust
- Keep well hydrated by drinking lots of clear fluids
- Seek medical attention for those experiencing symptoms such as a tight chest, coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath, weakness or fatigue

Vehicle Idling

Unnecessary idling of vehicles contributes to poor air quality, climate change and can harm your health. A vehicle's exhaust contains particulate matter, VOCs, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. These are all considered pollutants and affect the air we breathe. Children are susceptible to the negative effects of idling as their lungs are still developing and breathe in air at a faster rate than adults. The pollutants created from unnecessary idling can lead to:

- Lung infections and irritation, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema
- Some forms of heart disease
- Increased risk of cancers
- Reduced ability of the blood to carry oxygen in the body

Reducing unnecessary idling will cut pollutants; improve air quality and our health. Ways you can reduce or eliminate *individual* idling behaviours are:

- Use a block heater. You don't need to plug the block heater in all night. Set it on a timer for two hours before you drive away.
- On cold days warm up your car by driving it. Computer-controlled and fuel-injected engines are designed to warm up quickly as you drive.
- Turn the car off if you are going to be idle for more than 60 seconds. Turning your car on and off is not hard on your engine and doesn't use more gas.
- Avoid using a drive-thru. Park, turn off your car and walk inside. It's better for the environment and your body.
- Avoid using remote control car starters.
- On warm days open your windows to stay cool. It's better than running the air conditioner, wasting fuel and polluting the air we breathe.

In addition to those noted above, things you can do at your child care center that can help reduce the contaminants from vehicle exhaust in the air children breathe are:

- Move outdoor play areas away from parking areas, drop off and pick up zones
- During drop off and pick up times, close windows that may be near these areas
- Create an idle control program or policy. This will help educate parents, caregivers and staff about the importance of reducing idling and change behaviours.

A number of municipalities within Simcoe-Muskoka have idling by-laws in place. To see if your municipality has an idle reduction by-law or for more information on how you can implement a program or policy at your child care center contact *Your Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

List of Useful Outdoor Air Quality Resources

Fact Sheets

- [Smog](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Extreme Heat](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Smog Advisory Today? Why should I care? Even healthy kids are vulnerable](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca) (www.ene.gov.on.ca)
- [Outdoor Activities: Smog Matters](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca) (www.ene.gov.on.ca)
- [Idling](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Pamphlets

- [Smog and Your Health](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca) (www.ene.gov.on.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Air Quality Ontario](http://www.airqualityontario.com) (www.airqualityontario.com)
- [Health Canada](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- [Natural Resources Canada](http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca) (http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca)– Welcome to the Idle-Free Zone

LEARNING AND PLAY

Potentially hazardous substances can be found in some toys, craft supplies and play equipment. For more information on potential environmental hazards pertaining to toys or arts and craft items see *Infection Prevention and Control* section within this resource.

Outdoor conditions such as poor air quality, extreme heat or cold may also pose a health concern to children. See *Outdoor Air Quality* and *Extreme Weather* sections for more information.

To help protect children during learning and play:

- Wash children’s hands after playing on or around pressure treated wood structures
- Treat play equipment made of CCA treated wood (pressure treated wood structures built prior to 2004) with a sealant every one to two years.
- Avoid old, donated or inexpensive toys or other objects that may contain lead
- Choose machine-washable cloth toys, and toys with lead free paint
- Select non-toxic craft supplies and materials
- Avoid products that bear hazard symbols
- Use liquid, gel and paste art materials rather than powders and sprays
- Use water-based art and craft materials rather than solvent-based products
- Check Health Canada’s Consumer Product Safety website regularly for product recalls on all toys, play equipment, furniture and accessories; subscribe to the e-mail list (cpsn-subscribe-request@list.hc-sc.gc.ca) to be alerted of consumer advisories, warnings and recalls.
- Check local weather forecasts for extreme weather alerts (heat or cold warnings) or smog advisories.
- When playing outside on hot days, ensure children are protected. Refer to the *Sun Safe Environment* section of this resource for more information.
- [Protect children from mosquito bites.](#)

List of Useful Learning and Play Resources

- [Advancing Environmental Health in Child Care Settings](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
(www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- [Toy Safety](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Canadian Partnership for Children's Health & Environment](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
(www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)
- [Health Canada- Product Safety Program](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

PLASTICS

Plastics have become common in our everyday lives. Chemicals are typically added to plastics to give them certain qualities: to make them soft or hard; to give colour; or fire resistance. Some of these chemicals may be harmful to our health.

Three types of plastics that should be avoided when possible are:



polyvinyl chloride
(PVC, vinyl)



polystyrene (PS)



polycarbonate (PC)

OTHER

Note:

#7 contains BPA, however #7 is also used for bio-based plastics (labelled PLA). PLA bottles do not contain BPA.

Strategies to Choosing Plastics

General

- If you use plastics, #5, #1, #2 and #4 are better choices
- If you purchase a vinyl product, allow it to air outside for three days before using it indoors and ensure children do not mouth or chew on it.

Toys

- When buying toys, look for PVC- or phthalate-free toys. Avoid toys with “vinyl” or “PVC” on the label, or those with a strong chemical smell.
- Be aware that most inflatable toys (such as those for pool and bath) are made of vinyl.

Food

- When serving hot food, consider using glass, lead-free ceramic, stainless steel or bamboo
- Discard any plastic dishes that are scratched or worn
- Carry water in a stainless steel bottle without a plastic lining, or is labelled BPA-free.
- In the microwave, cook or warm food in glass or lead free ceramic. Avoid plastic containers or plastic wrap (even if they say microwave safe).
- Store food in glass, lead-free ceramic or stainless steel containers.
- When heating milk or formula, use non-plastic containers and then when the liquid has cooled to lukewarm, transfer it to BPA free bottles.

BPA Free

Polycarbonate plastics such as unbreakable plastic bottles, cups and baby bottles can contain BPA. BPA has been deemed a health hazard by Health Canada and must be avoided.

For more information refer to:

www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Environment/consumerproducts.aspx

Phthalate Free

Phthalates are used in a variety of consumer products and can be harmful to our health by affecting both reproduction and development. They can be found in fragranced products and can be used to “soften” plastics. Phthalates are known to “leach” out of plastics over time. It is important to monitor children’s plastic toys and their use. Health Canada recommends that if children are observed chewing or sucking on items such as vinyl bibs, squeeze or inflatable toys for an extended period of time to remove them from use.

For more information refer to

www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Environment/consumerproducts.aspx

List of Useful Plastics Resources

Fact Sheets

- [Plastics](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca) (www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Canadian Partnership for Children’s Health and Environment](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca) (www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

EXTREME WEATHER

What is Extreme Weather?

Climate change is likely to have wide-ranging effects on human health in the coming years. Extreme weather events are becoming more common and with that, heat waves and “cold snaps” may become more frequent. Both extreme heat and extreme cold events present several risks to children. Compared to adults, children are more susceptible to the effects of extreme heat and cold. They cannot dissipate heat or maintain core body temperature the same way an adult can, therefore putting them at risk for heat or cold related illnesses. Precautions need to be taken if learning and play are going to occur outdoors.

Environment Canada’s weather website www.weatheroffice.gc.ca provides information on forecasted watches and warnings pertaining to extreme weather.

Extreme Heat

Extreme Heat and Health

Extreme heat can be a challenge for the human body. During extreme heat events, temperatures can overwhelm the body’s copying mechanisms (ie. sweating) and heat related illnesses can occur. Children are vulnerable to the effects of extreme heat. Children have a high metabolic rate and as a result, produce more heat. Their capacity to sweat is not as great compared to adults; so it is more difficult for them to release heat from their bodies. Dehydration is also greater in children. Children rely on others to provide adequate fluids to them to stay hydrated.

Children who are suffering from obesity, anorexia, developmental delays or illnesses such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis or diarrhea are at even greater risk of acquiring a heat related illness and need to be monitored frequently.

There are several heat related illnesses that may affect children. These are summarized in the chart below. For more information call Your Health Connection or refer to www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Examples of Heat Related Illnesses

Condition	Cause	Symptoms	Prevention
Heat Rash	Hot, humid environment; plugged sweat glands.	Red, bumpy rash; severe itching.	Wash regularly, keeping skin clean and dry.
Heat Cramps	Heavy sweating depleting body's salt causing painful cramps in the muscles. <i>May also be a sign of heat exhaustion.</i>	Muscle pain or spasm, normally in the legs, arms or abdomen. May be associated with activity.	Avoid strenuous activity during times of high heat and humidity. Maintain fluid levels.
<p><i>The following conditions are considered more life threatening. Both heat exhaustion and heat stroke are considered medical emergencies.</i></p> <p><i>Medical attention must be sought immediately if signs of fainting, heat exhaustion or heat stroke are observed.</i></p>			
Fainting	Lack of blood flow to the head, causing loss of consciousness.	Cool moist skin; weak pulse.	Reduce activity levels and heat exposure. Drink fluids regularly.
Heat Exhaustion	Inadequate salt and fluid intake causes body's cooling system to start to break down. Body overheats but not above 40°C.	Heavy sweating; cool, moist skin; muscle cramps/pain; headache; nausea; weak pulse; normal or low blood pressure; feel faint or weak; shortness of breath; chest or abdominal pain	Reduce activity level in hot humid environments; maintain fluid levels.
Heat Stroke	Body's salt and water is depleted; sweating stops; and body temperature rises.	High body temperature 41°C or more; red, hot and dry skin; no sweating; rapid pulse; seizures; abnormal mental status; nausea.	Reduce activity levels. Maintain fluid levels. Recognize signs and symptoms.

Air Quality and Humidity

Air quality and humidity can present challenges when coupled with high temperatures. Generally, on hot days air quality can become poor and smog alerts can be issued (Refer to the [smog](#) section of this chapter for more information). The Air Quality Index (AQI) (www.airqualityontario.com/science/aqi_description.cfm) is a useful reference tool to determine how at risk you are during a heat event.

Reading	AQI - Description
Below 16	Air quality is in the very good category
16-31	Air quality is in the good category
32-49	Air quality is in the moderate category, and there may be some adverse effects for very sensitive people.
50-99	Air quality is in the poor category and may have adverse effects for sensitive members of the human and animal populations, and may cause significant damage to vegetation and property.
Above 99	Air quality is in the very poor category, and may have adverse effects for a large proportion of those exposed.

Adapted from Environment Canada (2011), What is the Air Quality Index

Humidity refers to the amount of water present in air. The Humidex is an index that describes how hot weather feels. It takes both temperature and humidity into consideration to derive a perceived temperature and comfort level. The Humidex index is an important tool to refer to when evaluating risk during an extreme heat event. When the humidity is high sweat does not evaporate as well from the body. This is particularly important when it comes to children, as they already are more vulnerable to the effects of heat.

Environment Canada will issue Humidex advisories when temperatures are expected to reach or exceed 30°C and the Humidex values are expected to reach or exceed 40°C. Below is a table describing the Humidex categories and expected health effects (Adapted from Environment Canada, 2011).

For more information about Humidex and advisories refer to Environment Canada’s website: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=86C0425B-1#h5>

Category	Humidex	Heat Syndrome
Caution	<29	Little discomfort. Fatigue possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Extreme Caution	30-39	Some discomfort. Heatstroke, heat exhaustion and heat cramps possible with prolonged exposure and/or physical activity.
Danger	40 – 54	Great discomfort, Avoid Exertion. Seek a cool shady location. Heat cramps or heat exhaustion likely. Heat stroke possible with continued exposure and/or physical activity.
Extreme Danger	> 55	Heatstroke imminent with continued exposure.

Precautions for Heat Days

Keep the children cool by:

- Ensuring children drink plenty of fluids (non-caffeinated)—even more than their thirst indicates
- Having children wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing
- Staying cool indoors and if possible, in an air-conditioned place
- Having electric fans for providing comfort by increasing evaporation, however when the conditions are extreme, fans will not prevent heat-related illness
- Keeping physical activity to an absolute minimum
- Drawing blinds/curtains to prevent radiant heat from entering classrooms
- Using water play tables
- Moving learning and play to an air-conditioned area (if possible)

Refer to the *Sun Safe Environment* safety section within this child care resource for more information on sun safety.

Extreme Cold

Extreme Cold and Health

Although most Canadians have adapted to cold environments, extreme cold poses many dangers to children and their caregivers. As noted above, children are not able to regulate their internal body temperature as well as adults and therefore caution must be taken during the late fall and winter months.

Cold related illnesses occur when the body loses heat faster than it can maintain it. They can be localized (frost bite, frost nip) or generalized (hypothermia). If a cold related illness is suspected in a child it is always recommended to seek medical attention. Below is a table containing common cold related illnesses:

Condition	Cause	Symptoms
Frost Nip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear lobes, noses, cheeks, fingers, or toes are exposed to the cold and the top layers of skin freeze 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skin turns white or yellowish and may feel numb • Skin feels soft to the touch • Experience a painful tingling or burning sensation
Frost Bite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, or toes, bare extremities • Exposure to extreme cold or contact with extremely cold objects • Tissue temperature falls below freezing (0°C), or when blood flow is obstructed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pale grey, waxy textured skin • Skin cold to the touch • Numbness and localized pain • Swelling, blistering
Hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body is unable to compensate for heat loss and core temperature starts to fall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering, confusion, weakness • Mumbling, stumbling • Pale skin colour; for infants look for cold reddish skin and low energy

Winter asthma may also be triggered or aggravated due to cold, dry air. Ensure children suffering from asthma are monitored closely.

Wind Chill

As with Humidex during the summer, wind chill is an important winter risk factor to consider when planning outdoor learning and play in the winter months. Wind chill takes into consideration the cooling effect seen from temperature and wind. Wind takes the protective layer of air close to the skin away and draws heat away from the body. When wind chill warnings are issued the risk of cold related illnesses increases.

Wind chill warnings are issued by Environment Canada when the wind speed is forecasted to be 15km/h or more and wind chill values are expected to last for 3 hours or more. For the areas of Simcoe County and District of Muskoka, the threshold used is -30°C or lower.

For more information about wind chill and its influence on cold related illnesses, visit Environment Canada – Canada’s Wind Chill Index (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/meteo-weather/default.asp?lang=En&n=5FBF816A-1>).

Precautions for Cold Days

- Cover exposed skin (exposed skin can become frostbitten in 30 seconds).
- Ensure children wear winter hats, mittens and scarves. Up to 40% of body heat loss can occur through the head. Winter wear will protect the chin, lips and cheeks against frost nip and frost bite.
- Keep children indoors if the temperature falls below -25°C, or if the wind chill is -28°C or greater.
- Drink warm fluids, ensure they are caffeine free.
- During physical activities ensure if children are sweating, cool off a little as wet clothes can freeze.
- Wear clothes in layers: inner layer, middle layer and outer layer.
- Keep moving. Limit time sitting – stand up and move around.
- Take shelter from the wind – this can reduce wind chill exposure.
- Always be alert for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Plan ahead! Refer to your local weather report or Environment Canada for weather watches and warnings (www.weatheroffice.gc.ca).

List of Useful Extreme Weather Resources

Fact Sheets

- [Extreme Heat](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Extreme Cold](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Health Canada: Safe Winter Fun](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- Frostbite: Canadian Paediatric Society
- [Environment Canada: Being Prepared for Summer](http://www.ec.gc.ca) (www.ec.gc.ca)

Pamphlets

- [Climate Change and Your Child's Health Brochure](http://www.cich.ca) (www.cich.ca)
- [Extreme Cold: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety](http://www.bt.cdc.gov) (www.bt.cdc.gov)
- [Extreme Heat: A Prevention Guide to Promote Your Personal Health and Safety](http://www.bt.cdc.gov) (www.bt.cdc.gov)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Emergency Preparedness and Response](http://www.bt.cdc.gov) (www.bt.cdc.gov)
- [Environment Canada](http://www.ec.gc.ca) (www.ec.gc.ca)

WEST NILE VIRUS AND EASTERN EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS

What is WNV and EEEV?

WNV

WNV is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause illness, including in rare cases, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

WNV can be spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become carriers of the virus when they feed on infected birds. Human infections from the virus are rare and those affected usually experience only mild symptoms such as fever or headaches. The illness can be serious and inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) can occur in a small number of cases.

EEEV

Eastern Equine Encephalitis virus (EEEV) is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause illness, including in rare cases, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain).

EEEV can be spread to humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become carriers of the virus when they feed on infected birds. Human infections from the virus are rare, however EEEV is the most severe mosquito-borne disease in North America. The illness can affect the central nervous system and cause severe complications and death.

EEEV has been identified in Ontario in mosquitoes and in horses, but to date *no human cases have been reported*.

What Can Day Nursery Staff Do To Help Prevent WNV and EEEV?

Reduce mosquito breeding sites on Child Care Centre property

Mosquitoes lay their eggs in stagnant water. Removing or weekly draining of objects that could contain stagnant water can reduce the number of mosquitoes around your facility. Check roof gutters, planters, birdbaths, recycling containers, toys that hold water, water play equipment and other potential areas where water can collect.

Prevent mosquitoes from entering buildings

Mosquitoes can enter buildings through open or unscreened windows or doors or broken screens. Ensure that window and door screens at your facility are tight-fitting and in good repair.

Protect yourself from mosquito bites

Mosquitoes are most active from May through September when the weather is warmer. Typically day nursery hours are not when mosquitoes are most active, which is at dusk and dawn. But for those field trips or special situations where mosquitoes could be in the area, take the following precautions:

- Notify parents of the situation and ask them to apply insect repellent to their children as per the personal insect repellents manufacturer's recommendations.
- When outside, everyone should wear light-coloured, long-sleeved shirts, long pants.

List of Useful West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis Resources

Fact Sheets

- [Personal Protection-WNV](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [EEEV](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Pamphlets

- [Pest Management Regulatory Agency –Safety Tips on Using Personal Insect Repellent](http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca) (www.pmra-arla.gc.ca)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- Health Canada (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- [Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care](http://www.health.gov.on.ca) (www.health.gov.on.ca)

PESTICIDES

What You Should Know About Pesticides and Your Health

Commercial pesticides may get rid of pests, but they can also kill soil bacteria, worms, honeybees, birds and other species that are beneficial to the environment. This means that pesticide use can actually make your lawn and garden more vulnerable to diseases and other pests.

Impacts on Children

There is concern that exposure to pesticides can pose higher risks for children. This is due to their:

- Greater hand-to-mouth contact with soil and house dust
- Smaller size, which places their bodies and breathing closer to the ground where pesticides build up
- Growing and developing bodies
- Immature metabolic systems that cannot break down toxins as well as adults

Pesticides and Your Health

Pesticide use is controversial. Many people wonder if exposure to pesticides causes health problems, and if so, what are the risks?

Impacts on Health

The answers to these questions are complex. Studies about the impact of pesticides on human health are not consistent, nor are they conclusive. However, research has shown that pesticides that are used for agriculture, lawns, and gardens are associated with:

- Some cancers (especially leukemias & lymphomas)
- Reproductive effects (including fertility problems and adverse pregnancy outcomes)
- Neurological effects (such as Parkinson's disease)

Research continues to look into the effects of pesticides on human health, including the impact of exposure on the immune system and brain development.

The Bottom Line

Since the long-term health effects of pesticide exposure are not fully known, it is best to avoid their use and to take precautions against being exposed to them.

Natural Options

Natural lawn and garden care practices can help your grass, flowers and other vegetation thrive.

Natural lawn and garden care methods include:

- Aerate lawn
- Mow grass 6-8 cm high
- Feed lawn with grass clippings
- Water grass deeply and infrequently
- Fertilize garden with compost
- Grow 'native' plants

By following these practices, you can eliminate the need for commercial fertilizers and pesticides. Many lawn care operators have 'natural' options available.

Keep Chemicals in Check

There may be occasions, when chemicals need to be used to protect health. Examples of this might be: poison ivy or oak, West Nile virus control. If using pesticides, follow these precautions:

- Buy only as much product as you need
- Follow label directions exactly
- Store chemicals away from children and food
- Never dump leftover chemical down the drain, toilet, or on the ground
- Never use pesticides in windy conditions or on smog alert days
- Always wear protective clothing when mixing or applying pesticides
- Take empty containers to a waste management site for disposal
- After handling chemicals wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Avoid breathing spray or smoking when using pesticides

List of Useful Pesticide Resources

Pamphlet

- [What you should know about Pesticides and your Health](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
(www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Internet Resources

- [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)
- [Health Canada: Pest Management Regulatory Agency](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)
- Go for Green (www.goforgreen.ca)
- [Toronto Public Health - Pesticides](http://www.toronto.ca) (www.toronto.ca)