



Hand Hygiene in Child Care

The single most important thing you can do to control infections is to keep hands clean! For children under the age of five, soap and water is the preferred method for washing hands. Child care staff and parents are responsible for teaching the proper way for children to wash their hands. Children who are young must be supervised when washing their hands and often assistance is required.

Procedure for Infant Hand washing:

- Clean the infant's hands thoroughly with a damp paper towel moistened with liquid soap.
- Rinse the infant's hands from wrists to fingertips using a fresh paper towel moistened with clear water.
- Dry the infant's hands with a fresh paper towel.
- Turn off the faucet using the paper towel and throw out the towel into a lined garbage container.
- Wash your own hands.

Use a hand wash sink supplied with hot and cold running water, paper towels and liquid soap in dispensers. Hot water temperatures should not exceed 49°C (120°F) to prevent scalding.

To wash hands properly, rub all parts of the hands and wrists with soap and water including in between fingers and under the finger nails.

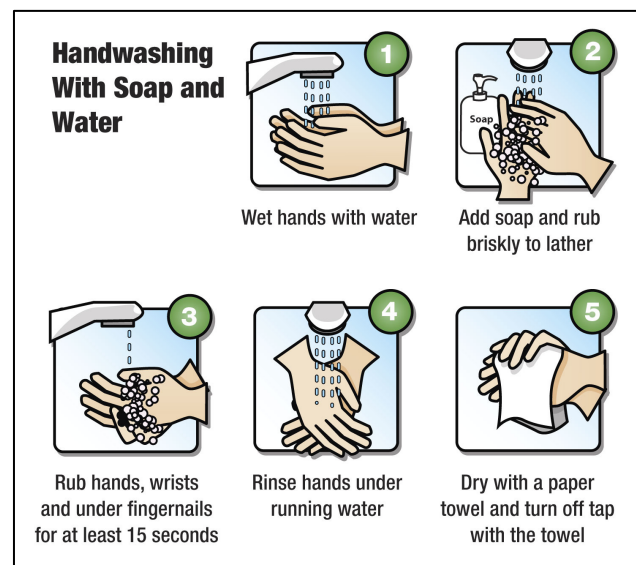
Wash hands for at least 15 seconds or more. Pay special attention to the areas of the hand most frequently missed.

Staff in child care facilities should support good hand hygiene:

- Keep nails short.
- Avoid wearing rings.
- Avoid artificial nails or nail polish.
- Remove watches and bracelets when washing hands or helping children wash hands.
- Wash forearms if they are likely to have been contaminated.
- Make sure that sleeves are rolled up and do not get wet during washing.

Skin Care

Intact skin is the first line of defence, therefore careful attention to skin care is an essential part of the hand hygiene program. If integrity of skin is an issue, the individual should be referred to a physician for assessment. Hand lotion prevents drying and cracked skin and should be used daily, particularly in winter months. Pump-type containers are recommended. To refill lotion/cream, containers should be cleaned with soap and water and dried prior to refilling. "Topping up" of lotion/cream should be avoided.



Call the Communicable Disease Team: ext. 8809

Revised 2010-12-06

Alcohol Based Hand Rubs

Alcohol-based hand rubs are a good alternative to soap and water when children's hands are not visibly dirty and access to a handwashing sink is limited (e.g. field trips). They are also an excellent tool for staff to use while moving between tasks in the centre. Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHRs) kill the germs on hands, including temporary illness-causing bacteria that are picked up off doorknobs, light switches and other surfaces that hands come into contact with.

Only hand rubs with alcohol as the main ingredient should be used in child care settings. The effectiveness of the sanitizers depends on the amount and type of alcohol used. Alcohol-based hand rubs should contain a concentration of 60-90% alcohol.

The products should have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Product Number (NPN) meaning they are registered with Health Canada. Non-alcohol based products may not kill common bacteria and viruses found in child care and are not recommended.

As per the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal, ABHRs are normally dispensed and used in very small quantities therefore they present minimal fire hazards under normal use. The fire risks can be reduced through education regarding the proper application of ABHRs, including the risk to health if used incorrectly.

Another noted concern is regarding the alcohol absorption in children when regularly using ABHRs. As per the Ontario Poison Control centre, the amount of alcohol absorbed by the skin is minimal and once the alcohol has evaporated, licking of the hands carries no chance of alcohol intoxication.

The following precautions for ABHRs are recommended in all child care settings:

- Dispensing should occur only under the direct supervision of staff.
- ABHRs should be in secure wall dispensers.
- Dispensers should be clearly labelled.
- ABHRs should be rubbed on hands until hands are completely dry.
- When not in use, the sanitizer product should be kept in a location not easily accessible to children (e.g. individual pump bottles locked in a cupboard at end of day).
- Children and staff should avoid exposure to open flames during and immediately after application.

