Island Health

SANITIZER INFORMATION
CHILD CARE
COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES LICENSING PROGRAM

Reducing the spread of germs in your child care environment is the best way to prevent illness. To get the best results, first ensure objects and surfaces are thoroughly scraped clean of foreign materials and food scraps, then sanitize using the four-step method.

1. **Wash**
   Wash with hot water and soap to reduce the amount of obvious dirt and debris. If you do not get rid of the large particles first, the power of the sanitizer is used up on the dirt that you can see and not on the harmful germs you cannot see on the surface.
2. **Rinse**
   Rinse with clean potable (drinkable) water to remove the soap so the sanitizer can work on the germs and is not used up on the soap.
3. **Sanitize**
   Sanitizing is usually done by soaking smaller items or spraying larger surfaces with a sanitizing solution and letting it sit for a certain amount of time. The sanitizing solution must be made with a product known to kill harmful germs. Read the product label to determine if rinsing is required.
4. **Air Dry**
   This allows sanitizers to be in contact with the surface for a longer time to inactivate/kill any germs that may be present. Air drying also prevents spreading any germs from one surface to another through the use of a damp towel.

Bleach as a Sanitizer

Household Chlorine Bleach (5.25 % sodium hypochlorite) is a readily available, easy to use, effective and inexpensive multipurpose product for sanitizing.

- Bleach reacts quickly, the compound breaks up and the reactive part is only available for a brief period of time and then forms products (mostly salt and water) that are no longer reactive and are safe for the environment.
- The bleach compound is very easily broken down by light; that is why bleach is sold in solid coloured bottles and new solutions must be made every day. Once the compound is broken down by light, there is no reactive part left to sanitize (to kill bacteria or anything else).
- Bleach is a safe sanitizer to use in daycares. In the concentrations recommended for sanitizing in daycare settings, once the surface has air dried, the reactive part of the bleach has long been inactivated and is no longer available to be ingested or to irritate the skin.

How Much to Use?

Bathrooms, potties and diaper change areas have more germs and these are generally more harmful than germs in other areas. A stronger solution (more bleach) is recommended for these areas than for the rest of the facility. The following concentrations are using household bleach with a concentration of 5.25% hypochlorite.

FOR GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING 1:500 SOLUTION		Contact Time
To make 1 litre	2 ml (½ teaspoon) bleach to 1 litre (4 cups) of water	Ten Seconds
To make 1 gallon	½ ounce (1 tablespoon) bleach to 1 US gallon of water	Ten Seconds

FOR MORE CONTAMINATED SURFACES 1:50 SOLUTION [This Concentration Does Not Include Food Contact Surfaces. If required to use on a food contact surface i.e., sudden outbreak of vomiting or diarrhea), rinse thoroughly with warm/hot water after appropriate contact time]		Contact Time
To make 1 litre	20 ml (4 teaspoons) bleach to 980 ml (4 cups) of water	One Minute
To make 1 gallon	3 ½ ounces (6 tablespoons) bleach to 1 US gallon of water	One Minute

WHEN TO SANITIZE		
HOW OFTEN	**ITEMS TO BE SANITIZED**	**SOLUTION**
Immediately	Any surface that has been soiled with urine, stool, mucus, vomit, blood or nasal discharge.	1:50
Before Use	Food preparation areas, food servicing table.	1:500
After Use	Toilet seats and diaper change areas. Food preparation equipment such as dishes and cutlery.	1:50 1:500
Daily	Hard surfaced or washable toys that are mouthed. Bathroom doorknobs, sink handles, gate, toilets, flush handles, washable floors. Water tables, if used that day.	1:500
Weekly	Beds or sleep mats, doorknobs, light switches, shelves, bathroom fixtures, helmets, hard hats for dress-up.	1:500
Monthly	Hard toys, chairs, tables, shelves, other furniture or surfaces frequently touched.	1:500
Weekly [Unless soiled. Must be washed immediately]	Bedding.	Machine Wash/Dry
Monthly [Unless Soiled. Must be washed immediately]	Stuffed animals, pillows and slip covers.	Machine Wash/Dry

Information Regarding Bleach

- Allow the surfaces to air dry after application to achieve the required contact time.
- Bleach should not be mixed with other cleaning products.
- The bleach solution should be made within the previous 24 hours (or freshly prepared) to be most effective.

Is There an Alternative to Bleach?

The use of other products as a sanitizer in licensed child care facilities is acceptable if the product meets certain criteria. Read the entire label and follow manufacturer's directions. Although it might seem complicated, the product label provides information to assist in determining if a product is acceptable.

- The product should be appropriate for use in a community care facility setting and staff should be able to follow the required directions without difficulty.
- The product must be suitable for the intended use. The label will state the intended uses of the product. Not every product will be the right choice for every use. You might find that you need several products for different sanitizing jobs.
- Some products are effective to kill only a few specific germs and some are effective against many germs.
- Some products specify that they are acceptable for use in food services, hospitals, etc.; however, some specify that they are not to be used in hospital nurseries. If it is not acceptable for a hospital nursery, then the product probably is not acceptable for a child care facility.
- Some products state that food contact surfaces (which would include toys or surfaces that might be mouthed) must be rinsed before re-contact with food. This type of product would not be recommended, as it can be difficult to complete the sanitizing step effectively while supervising children.
- Use of the product must be reasonable for a child care setting. For example, if the product must sit on the surface for an extended period of time, it may be difficult to keep young children away and safe. Check the manufacturer's information to ensure that the product has a DIN number and is appropriate for use in a child care facility.

Best Practice in Child Care Facilities

- Ensure routine cleaning is conducted and hygiene protocols are in place with special emphasis on areas where an ill child has been, in order to prevent further transmission.
- Have an illness policy which clearly outlines when children should be kept home and when parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the child from care.
- Emphasize proper hand hygiene for all staff and children.
- All disinfectants and sanitizers must be properly labeled, stored, used as per manufacturers' recommendation and kept out of the reach of children (preferably in a secured location).
- Have a spill kit with absorbent paper towel, PPE, garbage bags, and mop and bucket, and 1:50 dilution bleach on hand and ready to deploy.