



CHICA-CANADA PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Toys

Toys can be a reservoir for potentially pathogenic microorganisms that can be present in saliva, respiratory secretions, feces or other body substances. The purpose of this practice review is to provide infection prevention and control recommendations to ensure that patients, siblings and families have access to clean and safe play equipment and toys.

DEVELOPED BY:
CHICA-Canada's
Paediatric Interest Group
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Toys referred to in this practice review include infant and toddler toys, dolls, games, books, puzzles, cards, craft supplies, electronic equipment and teaching toys/dolls. Therapeutic toys are not included.

Infection Prevention and Control Practice Recommendations for Toys

1. Hand Hygiene

- Before and after playing with toys, children should be encouraged or assisted to clean their hands with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water.
- Playrooms should have access to both ABHR and a hand wash station.
- Play areas (e.g., physician's office) should have an ABHR station.
- Hand hygiene with ABHR must be supervised.

2. Toy Materials/Design

- Toys that are shared must be easily cleanable or dedicated to a single child.
- Toys should be nonporous and able to withstand rigorous mechanical cleaning.
- Smooth/non-textured toy surfaces are preferred, to facilitate cleaning.
- Water-retaining bath toys should not be used.

3. Frequency and Responsibility for Toy Cleaning and Disinfection

- There should be written procedures regarding the frequency and method for cleaning the toys.
- There should be assigned responsibility for cleaning and disinfecting toys.
- Staff cleaning and disinfecting toys should receive training.
- All toys should be cleaned and disinfected between users.
- Toys utilized or stored in individual patient rooms (including rooms where a child is on Additional Precautions) should be cleaned, at minimum, when visibly soiled and once per week. They should be cleaned sooner if a child has mouthed the toy.

- Playhouses/climbers should have their high touch surfaces cleaned on a daily basis. A thorough cleaning of the entire playhouse/climber should be done according to a regular schedule based on frequency of use and when visibly soiled.
- Shared electronic games, video equipment and computers should be cleaned between users. Computer keyboards should be either of the immersible type, have a keyboard cover or be made of a material that can be cleaned and disinfected. These should be wiped down prior to leaving the room (including the keyboard cover and all attachments). For a child on Additional Precautions, the items are to be assigned and terminally cleaned upon discharge or when precautions are discontinued.
- In waiting rooms, shared books, magazines, puzzles, cards and comics should be discarded when visibly soiled. These items should be dedicated to children on Additional Precautions and discarded afterwards if they cannot be cleaned.
- Toys should be removed from general waiting rooms if an adequate process cannot be established to ensure their daily inspection, cleaning and disinfection.

4. Toy Storage

- Playrooms or play areas that are used by more than one child should have an area for segregation of dirty toys (e.g., a bin into which children/parents/staff can place used toys).
- Clean toys should be stored in a manner that prevents contamination (e.g., dust and water splatter) and should be clearly marked as clean.
- Toy storage boxes/cupboards should be emptied and cleaned weekly or when visibly soiled.

5. Procedure for Toy Cleaning and Disinfection

- Toys must be inspected for damage, cracked or broken parts, as these may compromise cleaning. Any toy that is found to be damaged, cracked or broken should be discarded.
- Toys must be cleaned according to the manufacturer's instructions or local practices (e.g., in hot, soapy water) prior to disinfection.
- Disinfection options include:
 - Use of a commercial dishwasher/cart washer (must reach 82° C)
 - Hospital-grade, approved low-level disinfectant (follow manufacturer's recommendations regarding dilution and contact times)
 - 70% alcohol solution
 - 1/100 dilution of sodium hypochlorite (bleach)
- Ensure that the disinfectant being used is safe and suitable for the intended purpose and that the manufacturer's directions for dilution and contact times are followed.
- If a disinfectant is used, toy must be rinsed thoroughly prior to use.
- Allow toys to air-dry prior to storing.

References

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2. Well Beings: A Guide to Health in Child Care. 3rd edition ed. Grenier D, Leduc D, editors: Canadian Paediatric Society; 2008.
3. Hale CM, Polder JA. The ABC's of Safe and Healthy Child Care: A Handbook for Child Care Providers. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 1997.

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Contacts

Louise Holmes, Chair CHICA-Canada Paediatric Interest Group (mlholmes@cw.bc.ca)

Laurie Streitenberger, Co-chair CHICA-Canada Paediatric Interest Group
(Laurie.streitenberger@sickkids.ca)