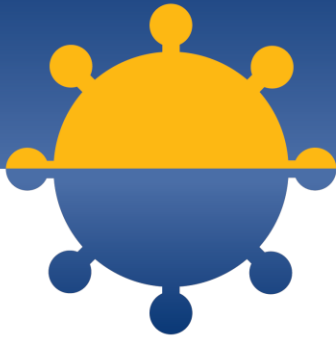


Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Key Facts

We are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

A sudden increase in people becoming infected with COVID-19 may impact the capacity of our health system to provide care to everyone who needs it.

By slowing the spread of the virus, our most vulnerable will be able to access care when and where they need it.

80% of people who are infected will have mild symptoms that will not require care outside of the home.

Around 1 out of 6 people who get COVID-19 may become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing.

Older people, and those with preexisting medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SLOW TRANSMISSION

Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Monitor yourself.

If you have a fever, a new cough or difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1 for guidance.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO TO SLOW TRANSMISSION

Support hand washing, social distancing, and adopt flexible sick-leave policies to allow people who are sick to stay home.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces using routine practices and consider cleaning and disinfecting twice a day if possible.

COVID 19: Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings

March 20, 2020

As child care owners/operators, you and your staff play a key role in protecting children from, and minimizing the impact of infection and illness. This is especially important at this time as we work to prevent and minimize the spread of the novel COVID-19 virus.

Here are some guidelines about hand washing, cleaning and ideas about social distancing for you to consider in your childcare setting.

If you're ill – stay at home.

Within childcare settings, children and staff will often have influenza or other respiratory viruses with symptoms similar to COVID-19 (i.e., influenza). For this reason, all children and staff who are ill with fever and/or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind need to stay home. If you are at all unsure of your status, the online assessment tool is a valuable resource to help assess whether you should be staying home or not.



Encouraging hand hygiene

As we know, little and big hands pick up germs easily, from anything they touch, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food and people. Handwashing with soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.

Children forget about proper hand washing so practice often and teach them to wash their hands properly in a fun and relaxed way. Everyone – all staff and children should wash their hands more often!

When sinks for hand washing are simply not available, you may use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (ABHS) containing at least 60% alcohol. Know that this is not very effective when a child's hands are quite soiled, when coming in from outside, for example. Read labels and wash hands with sanitizer the same way you would wash with soap and water.

Six steps to proper handwashing

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
3. Rub hands together **for at least 20 seconds** (sing the ABC's). Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails/creating a lather.
4. Rinse off all soap with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Discard the used towel in the waste container.

Children should wash their hands...

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before eating and drinking
- After a diaper change, using the toilet
- After playing outside or handling pets
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Child care staff should wash hands...

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before handling food, preparing bottles or feeding children
- Between handling raw and cooked food – cross contamination is a risk



- Before and after giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self
- After changing diapers, assisting a child to use the toilet, using the toilet
- After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
- After cleaning tasks (staff)
- After removing gloves
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Cough/sneeze etiquette:

- Cough and sneeze into arm or tissue.

Fever or coughing

If a child or staff member starts showing symptoms of what could be influenza or COVID-19, it is important to:

- Contact the child's parent or caregiver to come and pick them up right away.
- Have a separate and supervised area where you can promptly separate a child from others until their parent or caregiver can come and pick them up. Staff should go home right away.
- Continue to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene such as coughing in elbows instead of hands and throwing tissues out immediately after use.
- Do a thorough cleaning of the space once the child has been picked up.

The use of masks

- Masks are not recommended for children. In young children in particular, masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes.

Maintain cleaning and disinfecting policies

We don't yet know how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces, but early evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is very important to help to prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces.

- Make sure you are well-stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (i.e., soap, clean towels, paper towels and, if needed, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Increase how often you clean the premises and toys used.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces regularly.
- Stay on top of waste management. Empty your garbage containers often.
- Clean high-touch electronic devices (i.e., keyboards, tablets, smartboards) with 70% alcohol



- (i.e., alcohol prep wipes) making sure your wipe makes contact with the surface for 1 minute for disinfection.
- Use water, household detergents and common disinfectant products as this should be sufficient for cleaning and disinfection in childcare centres. You can also make your own disinfecting products using a mixture of 1 part household bleach and 9 parts water - making sure this solution on a wipe or cloth makes contact with the surface for 1 minute for disinfection.

What about toys?

- Keep enough toys out to encourage individual play. Offer toys that can be easily cleaned (i.e., no dress-up clothes or stuffed animals).
- Limit the use of playdough and goop to reduce hand-to-hand contact and cross contamination.

Social Distancing Ideas

Understandably, social distancing is challenging in a childcare setting. At the same time, it is important that we do what we can to try to assist children. Use ideas that work for your setting.

- Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes
- Help children to learn about social distancing by creating games. For example, put on some music and have children spread their arms side to side and spin around slowly trying not to touch their friends.
- Take children outside more often.
- Set up regular activities outside such snack time, arts and craft time.
- Regularly clean and sanitize items that are designed to be shared, such as game controllers.
- Set up mini environments within your facility to reduce number of children in a group, i.e., set up 2 or 3 craft areas for colouring or doing crafts.
- Increase the space between children during activities such as snack/lunch. i.e., move or separate tables, move chairs farther apart; move sleep areas further apart.
- Make use of all the space in your facility for napping to increase space between children.
- When children want to use the same area/activity redirect some children to another area.
- Set up distinct areas for children who may have symptoms of illness until they can be picked.
- Discourage any food or drink sharing.
- Eliminate group food preparation activities, i.e., making a cake and each child taking turns to dump the flour in the mixing bowl.
- Consider staggering snack/lunch time so you can accommodate smaller groups with more space.
- Minimize the number of non-essential people into the facility, i.e., entertainers, librarians.
- Reinforce and remind of the rule of “hands to yourself”.



- Consider using educational videos and online programs, i.e., watching Sesame Street, so children can sit independently and distanced from each other.

Provide reassurance, good listening and maintain routines

Children hear and take in a lot of the talk that is going on around them, especially as they get older.

- Reassure children about their personal safety and health. Tell children that it is okay to be concerned and there is a lot we can do to stay safe and healthy. Make sure the information is suitable for their age level.
- Let them know they can ask questions. Answer questions honestly but make sure that the information is suitable for their age level.
- Maintain familiar activities and routines, as possible, as it can reinforce the sense of security of children. At the same time, build in those social distancing strategies into your play and activities.

Keeping parents/caregivers informed

- Keep parents and caregivers informed about what you are doing in your childcare centre to take extra precautions, be responsive to children.
- Be clear about your policy that children need to stay home if they are sick.

March 20, 2020

Parts of this document have been developed based on the Preventing and Managing Illnesses in Child Care Centres Peel Region <https://www.peelregion.ca/health/infectioncontrol/pdf/ENV-0227.pdf>

