

A **PRINTED** copy of this guideline may not be the most recent version. The **OFFICIAL** version is located:

[<http://ipac.vch.ca/Documents/Acute%20Resource%20manual/Shared%20Toys%2c%20Puzzles%2c%20Games%20and%20Reading%20Materials.pdf>]

IPAC BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINE
Shared toys, puzzles, games and reading materials

DATE: September 28, 2016
REVISED DATE:
REVIEWED DATE: September 7, 2017

PURPOSE

To provide infection prevention and control guidance to staff and volunteers responsible for providing shared recreational reading materials, games, puzzles and toys to patients/clients/residents¹ in all health care settings.

BACKGROUND

Although there are published studies indicating paper materials (e.g., books, magazines, puzzles) carry low levels of bacteria, shared paper materials do not present a significant source of microorganism transmission in health care settings. Under specific circumstances additional restrictions and recommendations may be recommended by Infection Prevention and Control.

The risk of transferring microorganisms from **non-soiled** paper is negligible and risk-reduction should be balanced with the quality of the patient care experience.

PROCEDURE

Reading Materials, Games & Puzzles

- Inspect reading materials, games, & puzzles prior to placing in waiting room/lounge and on a routine schedule.
- Discard if contaminated with wet or dried body fluids, worn, torn, soiled, damaged, or are infested (e.g. bedbugs).
- Remove shared reading materials during pandemic outbreaks or outbreaks that are difficult to resolve. Removing these materials at times of heightened transmission/outbreak allows for removal of potentially contaminated items and for thorough cleaning & disinfection of surfaces they were covering.
- Reading materials provided to patients on Additional Precautions are sent home with the patient on discharge, bagged and tagged for pick-up by patient following discharge, or discarded. These materials should not be returned to circulation.

Toys

- Toys should be made of cleanable, non-porous material (hard plastic).

¹ Patients/clients/residents referred to as patients

- Soft, plush toys must be dedicated to an individual and are to be sent home with patient/resident or discarded at discharge. Advise patients/families to bring their own soft/plush toys as needed.
- Advise families of patients with known or suspected infection to avoid play areas/use of shared toys.
- Toys used by patients on additional precautions must be dedicated to the patient and cleaned/disinfected (wipeable, non-porous material only) or sent home with the patient on discharge.
- Ensure toys are safe and age appropriate (e.g., sharp edges, choking risk)

Hand Hygiene

- Encourage use of hand hygiene before and after handling shared items.
- Ensure all hospital waiting rooms have:
 - Availability of alcohol-based hand rub
 - Surgical procedure masks
 - Respiratory etiquette signage
 - Tissue and waste receptacle for disposal of used tissues
 - Process to ensure separation of patients with respiratory symptoms, draining wounds or incontinence
- Ensure all hospital lounges have:
 - Availability of alcohol-based hand rub
 - Respiratory etiquette signage
 - Tissue and waste receptacle for disposal of used tissues

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Where shared toys are placed/used, designate cleaning and disinfection responsibility.
- Inspect toys prior to cleaning, discard damaged toys.
- Clean toys on a routine schedule, consult IPAC for recommended frequency:
 - Clean daily in high risk settings such as emergency departments, clean weekly in low risk settings such as community clinics
 - Toys intended for infants or young children that may be mouthed should be deposited into a dirty bin and cleaned after every use
 - Toys that have become visibly soiled with dirt, debris, blood or body fluids should be immediately removed from circulation for cleaning and disinfection
- Bins used to store toys should be cleaned on a routine schedule
- Cleaning toys:
 - Use a dishwasher with a sanitizer cycle and air dry before storage, or
 - Clean and disinfect toys thoroughly with the standard hospital ready-to-use wipes (e.g., Accell Intervention) and allow to air dry. Wipe with damp cloth to remove any residue prior to storage. Note: If toy is grossly soiled, clean first with warm soapy water, then wipe with disinfectant.

REFERENCES

- CHICA-Canada's Pediatric Interest Group, CHICA – Canada Practice Recommendation, Toys, Nov 20, 2011, <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/Toys%20Practice%20Recommendations%202011.pdf>
- Control of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the office and clinic. Matlow, A. & Morris, S. Canadian Medical Association Journal vol. 180 no 10, pp 1021-1024. (2009 May).

[Control of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the office and clinic](#)

- Infection control in paediatric office settings. Moore, D. *Pediatrics and Child Health*, 13 (5), pp 408-419. (2008 May). Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2532878/#b42-pch13408>.
- Swabbing of waiting room magazines reveals only low levels of bacterial contamination. Charnock C. *British Journal of General Practice*, 55, pp 37-39. (2005 January). Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1266241/>
- Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and control of Infections in all Health Care Settings, 2nd Edition. PIDAC. (2012 May) p.97. Available at: http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Best_Practices_Environmental_Cleaning_2012.pdf
- Public Health Agency of Canada. (2012). Infectious Disease Prevention and Control. Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings. Retrieved from: https://www.picnet.ca/wp-content/uploads/PHAC_Routine_Practices_and_Additional_Precautions_2013.pdf