



Park Lawn Preschool Inc.

*Park Lawn Preschool * Humber Bay Child Care Centre * PLP Early Learning Centre at St. Mark*

PLP HS 203 Biting Incidents

Bites among children in child care centres occur often. Young children often bite each other during play or if they become angry or upset. The good news is that most bites do not break the skin and are unlikely to cause infection. When bites do break the skin, both the biter and the person bitten need proper management.

A human bite will rarely transmit a bacterial infection, although wound infections can be associated with a severe bite among children. Good wound care and precautions can eliminate any risk for bacterial infection.

Only a bite that breaks the skin can transmit hepatitis B. Hepatitis B can be transmitted from saliva or blood of an infected individual. The risk of transmission of hepatitis B from a child with unknown hepatitis B status is extremely low.

Transmission of HIV and hepatitis C through biting incidents in child care settings, even with minor skin breakage, is extremely unlikely.

Caring for Bite Wounds

If a child is bitten by another at the child care centre, the child care provider should provide appropriate first aid, seek appropriate medical help as necessary and contact the parent/guardians of those involved in the biting incident.

If the skin is not broken, the wound should be cleaned with soap and water and cold compress applied.

If the skin has been punctured **with or without blood**, the child care provider should:

- Let the wound bleed gently.
- Clean the wound carefully with soap and water.
- Apply a mild antiseptic (if available).
- Inform the parents of both children (the bitten and the biter).
- If the bite is very serious and bleeds a lot, the child care provider will recommend the child seek medical attention.
- Check to see whether the child has been vaccinated against tetanus and if he has had all of the recommended doses. If not, the child will be directed to see a doctor or clinic for tetanus vaccine.
- Check whether the bitten child and the biter have been fully vaccinated against hepatitis B. If not, the child will be directed by Toronto Public Health to see a doctor or clinic for hepatitis B vaccine.

Reporting Bite Wound Incidents

- Complete the Day Nursery Biting Incident Investigation Report (Schedule A).
- Notify Toronto Public Health for further directions at
 - Toronto Health Connection at 416-338-7600, TTY at 416-392-0658 OR
 - Communicable Diseases Inquiry Line at 416-338-8563

- Submit the completed report to Toronto Public Health by FAX at (416) 338-1539

The Toronto Public Health *CIDIC* investigators will respond to reports of human bites and provide further direction to the parents or their physicians.

Ensure you have the following information when you call Toronto Public Health:

- Name, address and tel. # of the daycare
- Name of the daycare supervisor or a contact person
- Names, addresses and or dates of birth of the biter and the bitten individual(s)
- Contact names and telephone numbers (work, cellular, and/or home) of the parents/guardians for both biter and the bitten individual(s)
- Date and time of the incident
- Where on the body the bite took place (e.g., the arm, face)
- Description of the wound (i.e. minor scratch, open wound, break in skin)
- Hepatitis B immunization status of the biter and the bitten individual(s), if known
- Names and telephone numbers of the family doctors for both biter and the bitten individual(s), if known.

The CIDIC investigator will assess the severity of the bite, the risk of exposure, and the Hepatitis B status of both children involved. The CIDIC investigator will assess the risk of transmission of blood borne diseases based on the details of the incident, most importantly whether the skin of the bitten child was broken. If the skin was **not broken**, the exposure may be deemed insignificant exposure and the investigator will advise the childcare staff that there is no risk of transmission of blood borne diseases and close the case. If the incident details reveal that the skin of the bitten child **was broken**, then the exposure will be considered as significant and the investigator will advise the childcare to notify the parents of the incident and inform the parents that Toronto Public Health will be contacting them.

Information for Parents of a biting child:

- Do not pretend to bite your child or let your child bite you in play.
- Help your child to understand that biting hurts and can be dangerous to them and to whoever they bite.
- Observe how, when and why your child is biting, to help guide management.
- Provide teething toys or safe, chewy foods if your child is having discomfort from teething.
- Discuss with your child care centre how the staff are dealing with the biting incidents and share how you are preventing biting at home.