

## Recommendations for Toys in Offices and Waiting Rooms

<p><b>Situation</b></p>	<p>With the concerns surrounding H1N1 influenza, there is increased attention being directed toward cleaning and disinfection of common/ high touch surfaces including toys in hospital and physician waiting rooms. Department of Health and Health Promotion &amp; Protection have received numerous requests from health care providers for recommendations on management of toys in their particular health care setting.</p>
<p><b>Background</b></p>	<p>Given concern regarding microbial contamination of toys and risk of transmission of pathogens in waiting rooms, several hospitals and physicians' offices have removed toys from their general waiting rooms (excluding areas which toys are used in therapy). While these measures have been spurred on by the current H1N1 pandemic, concerns of transmission of other pathogens exist.</p>
<p><b>Assessment</b></p>	<p>Microbial contamination of toys in hospitals, physician's offices and clinics has been well- documented. Regular cleaning/disinfection schedules have been recommended in various guidelines. However the ability to operationalize an effective cleaning schedule is often difficult or impossible. Toys can easily become heavily re-contaminated in between cleanings, and become an important vector of transmission, particularly with smaller children who may have frequent oral contact with their hands, toys or environmental surfaces.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Toys should be considered for removal from general waiting areas if there is an inability to ensure a minimum of daily cleaning and disinfection, toy use cannot be monitored to ensure heavily soiled items are removed from circulation, or if the priority is to further minimize possible vectors of transmission (recognizing that toys provide a sometimes valuable role in waiting rooms) in this setting. Parents and caregivers can be encouraged to bring the child's own toys.</li> <li>2. If opting to keep toys in general waiting areas that will be shared with multiple children, then the following recommendations apply:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Soft toys in waiting rooms pose a risk and therefore should be removed from waiting areas</li> <li>b. Hard surfaces toys should undergo a regular cleaning schedule at least once daily using a cleaner/ disinfectant. This can be accomplished by:                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submersing or wiping toys with a hospital approved low-level disinfectant solution or pre-moistened wipe. Phenolic disinfectants should not be used.</li> <li>▪ Allowing the recommended wet-contact time as specified on the label instructions for use.</li> <li>▪ Rinsing immersed toys with clean water and drying with a clean towel or air-drying.</li> <li>▪ Wiping large playroom toys or surfaces with low-level disinfectant and air-drying.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Magazines and books can become contaminated but are unable to be disinfected. Regular purging of old magazines and encouraging hand hygiene is a reasonable approach.</li> </ol>	

<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (2009), <i>APIC Text of Infection Control and Epidemiology 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Volume II Scientific and Practice Elements</i>, Washington, DC: U.S.A</li><li>▪ Canadian Paediatric Society, Paediatrics and Child Health Vol. 13 No. 5 May/June 2008, <i>Infection control in paediatric office settings</i>, Oakville, ON, Canada: Pulsus Group Inc.</li><li>▪ Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance (2007), <i>Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Long Term Care, Home and Community Care including Health Care Offices and Ambulatory Clinics</i>, Gabriola, BC: Canada</li><li>▪ E. Merriman, P. Corwin and R. Ikram (2002), <i>Toys are a potential source of cross-infection in general practitioners' waiting rooms</i>. In British Journal of General Practice February 2002.</li><li>▪ I. McKay, T.A. Gillespie (2009), Rose Garden Medical Centre, <i>Bacterial contamination of children' toys used in a general practitioner's surgery</i>, <a href="http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10765527?ordinalpos=3&amp;itool">http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10765527?ordinalpos=3&amp;itool</a>, Edinburgh, Scotland: U.K.</li><li>▪ IWK Health Centre (2009), <i>Infection Prevention and Control Manual – Toy Cleaning and Disinfection</i>, Halifax, NS: Canada</li></ul>