

Wee Care

Environmental
Quality Division

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Prairie
TEXAS

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Handling and Storage of Baby Food

Young children have immature immune systems that are not strong enough to combat dangerous pathogens. Their lower body weight allows smaller quantities of pathogens to have a greater impact on their health, and compared to adults they have reduced stomach acid production. Acids produced by the stomach help to contain dangerous bacteria that enter the body through ingestion.

Do not feed a baby directly from a commercial container or jar. Instead, use a clean spoon to take out a portion of food and place it into a clean

bowl to feed the baby. In addition, any leftover food must be discarded when it has been contaminated with the baby's saliva.



Heating only the portion of food that will be used is also important. All foods are at a greater risk of growing bacteria when they go from cold

to hot and back more than once.

Bacteria grows best in temperatures ranging from 41° F to 135° F. Any leftover food that has not been in contact with dirty utensils, saliva, or unwashed hands must be refrigerated promptly.

Expiration dates are also very important. Read the labels carefully before buying and opening any food item. If the item is already expired do not use. Federal regulations require that all baby food be stamped with expiration dates. The sale or expired baby food is prohibited.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Surfaces

Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces are important steps to prevent the spread of diseases. This can be accomplished with soap, warm water, and sanitizer. A great sanitizer can be prepared with 1 tablespoon of bleach to a gallon of

water. Use testing strips to measure the concentration of bleach. After cleaning with soapy water, wipe the surfaces with the bleach solution and let it air dry. Use this method also to clean and sanitize high chair trays, sinks, kitch-

en counters, and large plastic or rubber toys.

Cleaning and sanitizing are not the same.

Cleaning – removes dirt and debris and comes before sanitizing.

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Shigella

Shigella are bacteria that can infect the digestive tract and cause a wide range of symptoms, from watery diarrhea, cramping, vomiting, and nausea, to more serious complications. Shigella infection or shigellosis is most common during the summer months and usually affects young children. The bacteria is transmitted via ingestion of contaminated food or drink items. The fecal-oral route is the main transmission mode. The infection with

Shigella is very contagious, but like many other diseases can be prevented with good sanitary practices. Washing hands after using the restroom and before handling food is the best preventive method.

The bacteria produces a toxin that attacks the lining of the large intestine leading to bloody diarrhea. Symptoms of shigellosis may include:

- Abdominal cramps
- High fever

- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Painful bowel movements

In severe cases of shigellosis, a person may have convulsions (seizures), a stiff neck, a headache, extreme tiredness, and confusion. Shigellosis can also lead to dehydration and in rare cases, other complications, like arthritis, skin rashes, and kidney failure.



Washing hands thoroughly is the best preventive method.

Preparing Bottles of Formula

Baby formula and milk are great sources of nutrients for bacteria when handled inappropriately. To prevent bacterial contamination in a day care setting, always clean and sanitize the can of formula before opening. If you use a can opener, clean it too.

Unopened containers of powdered formula should be cleaned carefully to prevent the introduction of moisture into the powder.

Used bottles should not be refilled with new formula without first washing and sanitizing.

If the formula has been prepared at home by the parents, ensure that bottles are placed in refrigeration immediately after they arrive at your business. Prepared formula should be kept refrigerated at or below 41°F.



Preventing Food Poisoning

Food poisoning is usually transmitted through the ingestion of food or drinks left in the temperature danger zone (between 41°F and 135 °F). Bacteria grows well in this range. To prevent their growth you must maintain all food and drink items at their proper holding temperature when not handling. Sanitizing is also a good prevention method

because clean utensils and surfaces give bacteria little chance to survive. Washing hands properly is considered the most important step to prevent outbreaks of food borne illnesses.

Babies and toddlers are at a higher risk from getting food poisoning due to their immature gastrointestinal tract.

The symptoms of food poisoning include, but are not limited to, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever. Prevention is important. However, sometimes even with good practices a child can get sick. If in doubt always consult with the parents or the child's physician.



Heat Stroke

When Heat Stroke occurs the human body becomes overheated (hyperthermia) and cannot maintain control over internal temperatures.

High ambient temperatures, physical activity, and dehydration are the main causes of heat stroke. Fever, on the other hand, is caused by substances in the body as a result of inflammatory processes or infections.

Children are more susceptible to heat strokes than adults because their bodies can heat up five times faster than adults.

Since 1998, more than 550 children in the U.S. have died from hyperthermia, when left unattended in a vehicle. More than half of these deaths occurred when distracted caregivers forgot a child in a vehicle.

The symptoms include

headache, dizziness, confusion, disorientation, hot and flushed dry skin, and high internal temperature.

Preventing heat stroke:

- Never leave a child unattended inside a vehicle or in a hot area
- Have children drink plenty of clear unsweetened liquids, but during profuse sweating electrolytes need to be replenished

For more information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/extremeheat/warning.html>



Physical Activity for Children

From the time children are born through age 5, their bodies are growing every day, in many ways. Being physically active improves children's overall health. It is important that you make exercise a daily activity for the children under your care.

Benefits of physical activity:

- Maintain healthy weight
- Reduce risk of developing obesity-related illnesses (type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels)
- Build strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Enhance motor and social skills and brain development

- Develop and maintain strong bones
- Sleep better

More and more evidence shows that children who are active tend to have fewer behavioral and disciplinary problems, do better in school, and have longer attention spans in class.



SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than 1 year of age. Each year in the U.S. over 4,500 infants die suddenly of unexplained causes. SIDS may be associated with abnormalities in the portion of an infant's brain that controls breathing and arousal from sleep.

Although all babies are vulnerable the following steps should be taken as preventive measures:

- Place infants to sleep on their back
- Their mattress should be firm and covers, pillows, bump pads, toys, etc., should be avoided
- Adult beds are not safe for babies
- Babies should not sleep

next to the caregiver until at least 6 months of age

- Avoid exposure to second hand smoke
- Avoid contact with adults or other children with respiratory infections
- Constant monitoring of the sleeping baby is also important

For more information visit: <http://www.sids.org>



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West Nile Virus In Children

The West Nile Virus (WNV) is a disease transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes acquire the virus through biting infected birds. WNV season generally occurs from May to October, but it can be present all year-round. Most cases of WNV are mild. However, the virus can cause life-threatening illnesses such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the meninges).



Symptoms

Most children infected with WNV experience only mild, flu-like symptoms for a few days. These symptoms appear within 3 to 14 days of infection. About 20 percent of the infected children will develop West Nile fever: fever, headache, body aches, skin rash, and swollen lymph glands. The more severe form of the WNV is present in one out of 150 cases and the symptoms may include: neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and coma.

Prevention

Currently, there is no vaccine available to prevent WNV in humans. The CDC recommends taking the following steps to avoid mosquito bites:

- Stay indoors at dusk and dawn. These are peak hours for mosquito bites.
- If playing outdoors, have the children wear long-sleeved clothing treated with repellents.
- Eliminate standing water sources from around your establishment.
- Apply insect repellent containing DEET to children playing outdoors.
- Use products with DEET concentrations of 30 percent or less on children ages 2 to 12. Using DEET concentrations greater than 30 percent offer no additional benefit.
- When using repellent, apply it to your own hands and then rub them on the child.
- Keep repellents out of reach of children.

For more information visit: www.gptx.org/FightTheBite



Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas. This gas, however, interferes with the body's ability to uptake oxygen and send it to all body tissues. Carbon monoxide is the most common type of air poisoning in many countries. Young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of carbon monoxide because of their smaller bodies. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headaches, confusion, vertigo, nausea, and

drowsiness. Carbon monoxide cannot be detected without an alarm.

Prevention

- Make sure your establishment has an operating carbon monoxide alarm
- Alarms must be installed at every level, specially near sleeping areas
- Test batteries frequently to ensure operability
- Check alarms for expiration dates and replace according to the manufac-

turer's recommendations

- Have the heating system, water heater, and any other gas appliance serviced by a qualified technician every year

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are not the same

If the detector sounds leave the premises immediately and call **911**

For more information visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/co>