Preventing and Managing Illnesses in Child Care Centres

Do your part! STOP the spread of illness
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What these guidelines are about

Children are particularly susceptible to illnesses for several reasons. They have not been exposed to many common germs, their immune systems are still developing, and let’s be honest, they usually have poor hygiene habits!

Child care centre owners and staff play an important role in protecting children from, and minimizing the impact of, infection and illness. This manual will help you strengthen your child care centre’s infection control program and assist child care staff to:

- Prevent infections from occurring and spreading
- Identify and control illnesses and outbreaks
- Know when to contact Peel Public Health about an illness or outbreak
- Communicate with parents about an illness or outbreak

These guidelines also contain useful forms, schedules and posters to help you implement appropriate infection controls. Please share this booklet with all staff and keep it handy for quick referral.

How Peel Public Health plays a role

Peel Public Health ensures infection control programs are in place in child care centres. Our public health inspectors help you with:

- Infection control inspections to assess the use of appropriate infection prevention and control practices in licensed day nurseries
- Food safety inspections (to comply with Ontario Food Premises Regulation 562)
- Consultation on developing written child care infection control policies and procedures
- Infection control education materials
- Guidance and support in the event of an outbreak and/or an emergency situation

Immunization requirements

Child care staff should ensure that before a child is admitted to a child care centre, the child is immunized according to the Ontario Immunization Schedule.

Staff immunization should also follow the Ontario Immunization Schedule.

Visit ImmunizePeel.ca for more information on immunization requirements in child care centres.
Preventing illnesses

Child care centres need good controls to help reduce the number of infections. A good infection control program is one that everyone follows all the time, all the way. Well-trained and educated child care centre owners, staff and children work together to ensure that a consistent approach becomes normal routine.

This section provides helpful guidelines to child care staff so they can:

- Create and follow written policies and procedures
- Practice and promote hand hygiene
- Follow routine practices when cleaning blood and body fluids
- Practice proper diapering and toileting
- Maintain a clean centre
- Handle food safely
- Ensure that immunization for child care staff and children is up to date
- Observe and document child care staff and children for signs of illness, and share concerns and information with parents and Peel Public Health

Policies and procedures

Well written and accurate policies and procedures promote an effective, efficient and consistent approach to infection prevention and control.

Peel Public Health requires your child care centre to have policies and procedures in place for:

1. Excluding, re-admitting and cohorting ill children and child care staff
2. Reporting communicable diseases and suspected outbreaks to Peel Public Health
3. Communicating illnesses and outbreaks to parents or guardians
4. Handling blood and body fluids, and recording incidences
5. Dealing with emergency situations (fires, power outages, sewage back-up, no heat, no water or water interruption)
6. Diapering
7. Cleaning and disinfecting toys, pet cages, furniture, high-touch areas, sensory and water play tables

Refer to Peel Public Health Policy and Procedure Guidelines for Child Care Centres (Appendix 1) for detailed steps in creating policies and procedures.
Hand hygiene

Little and big hands pick up germs from anything they touch, and they 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.

Encouraging hand hygiene

Teach children how to wash their hands properly in a relaxed and fun way, e.g. sing ‘Happy Birthday’ twice while washing their hands for a more thorough handwash. Everyone – owners, staff and children should wash their hands more often when an illness or infection is identified in the centre.

Refer to Handwashing poster (Appendix 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Six steps to proper handwashing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wet hands with warm running water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds. Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails/creating a lather.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Rinse off all soap with running water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Discard the used towel in the waste container.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children should wash their hands...

- When they arrive at the centre and before they go home
- Before eating, drinking, using water tables
- After a diaper change, using the toilet
- After playing outside, handling pets, cages or other pet objects
- 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, feeding children
- Between handling raw and cooked food – cross contamination is a risk
- Before 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 (e.g. runny noses, spit, vomit, blood)
- After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects
- After cleaning, and removing gloves
- After handling garbage
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
Using disposable gloves

- Disposable gloves do not replace handwashing.
- Child care staff must wash their hands before gloves are put on and immediately after gloves are removed.
- Child care staff should wear disposable gloves to clean up blood, vomit, urine and stool.
- Child care staff should wear disposable gloves when they have cuts on their hands and when the diaper change involves a messy bowel movement.

Five steps for putting on and taking off disposable gloves

1. Wash your hands.
2. Put on gloves. Be careful not to tear or puncture the glove.
3. Remove gloves by using a glove-to-glove and skin-to-skin technique. Grasp the outside edge near the wrist and peel away, rolling the glove inside out. Reach under the second glove and peel away.
4. Discard gloves immediately into the garbage.
5. Wash your hands.

Alcohol-based hand rubs

Alcohol-based hand rubs are not recommended for routine use and when hands are visibly soiled. However, hand rubs are useful when a sink or running water isn’t available. Be sure to choose a product that is alcohol-based. Products that are not alcohol-based will not kill germs. Because they contain 60 to 90% alcohol, hand rubs are a fire hazard and can be harmful if swallowed by children. To reduce the risk, always have child care staff help children use alcohol-based hand rubs.

Correct way to clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub

1. Squirt a small amount (1 to 2 full pump or a “loonie” sized amount) onto the palm of one hand.
2. Swirl the fingertips of your other hand into the product on your palm.
3. Switch the product to the palm of your other hand.
4. Swirl the fingertips of your other hand to clean, them, too.
5. Scrub all surfaces of your hands – wrists, between fingers, backs of hands, thumbs - until your hands are dry at least 15 seconds.
Blood and body fluids

Blood and body fluids, such as vomit, stool, and urine, can carry germs. Child care staff are exposed to blood and body fluids during routine duties and when spills or accidents occur.

Protect yourself and the centre from harmful germs when cleaning up blood and body fluids by following these best practices:

- Assume that all blood, body fluids and secretions, except sweat, are potentially infectious.
- Wear disposable gloves and other necessary protective equipment to prevent transmission of bloodborne infections.
- Wash your hands to prevent the spread of germs.

For more information, please see the Cleaning Blood and Body Fluid Poster (Appendix 3).
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Diapering and Toileting

Child care staff need to be very careful when diapering or helping a child use the toilet. The diapering area and toilet need to be kept clean and the right equipment and materials should be on hand and readily accessible.

Diapering area – what you need

Diapering location and surface

- Separate diapering area from feeding and food preparation areas.
- Use a diapering surface that is non-absorbent and easy to clean.
- Do not rinse or wash soiled diapers and clothing.
- Use a foot activated garbage receptacle with a disposable liner.
- Post and follow appropriate diapering procedures.

Creams, ointments and wipes

- Prevent contamination of creams and ointments. You can use a single use applicator or a new pair of disposable gloves.
- Label creams, ointments and wipes for each child.

Hand sink

- Provide a designated hand sink adjacent to diapering table.
- Provide liquid soap and paper towels in dispensers.

Cleaners and disinfectants

- Provide appropriate cleaner and disinfectant at or near the diapering table. Label the spray bottle with the disinfectant name. Do not store disinfectant in a locked cupboard but do store it away from children’s reach.

9 steps for diapering

1. Collect supplies.
2. Wash your hands.
5. Remove and discard soiled rubber gloves.
6. Diaper and dress the child.
7. Wash your hands and help child wash their hands.
8. Clean and disinfect the diaper changing surface. Make sure the surface remains wet for the appropriate contact time.
9. Wash your hands again.

9 steps for toileting or using a potty

1. Place the child on the toilet or the potty.
2. Assist the child with cleaning themself (if necessary).
3. Wash your hands.
4. Help the child get dressed (or diapered).
5. Wash child’s hands.
7. Clean and disinfect the toilet and toilet ring as required. If using a potty, empty contents of potty into the toilet carefully to avoid splashing. Clean and disinfect the potty.
8. Remove gloves and dispose in a lined waste receptacle.
9. Wash your hands.
Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting reduce the spread of germs. Some germs can live for hours, days or weeks on toys, counters, diapering table, door knobs, computer key boards and other surfaces.

Cleaning with soap and water removes dirt and grease that can hide and protect germs from disinfectants. Cleaning will substantially reduce the number of germs that may be on surfaces. Disinfecting after cleaning will kill most of the germs that were left behind.

Note that vinegar is not a disinfectant and should not be used for disinfecting in child care centres. Vinegar does not kill germs!

Set up a schedule to ensure all cleaning and disinfecting duties are consistently completed.

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Six steps for cleaning and disinfecting

1. Clean with soap and water.
2. Rinse with clean water.
3. Apply the disinfectant according to the manufacturer’s instructions on the label.
4. Allow the surface or object to soak in the disinfectant for the required contact time. Or refer to the Disinfection Chart for Child Care Centres (Appendix 4) for the required contact times when using household bleach and water.
5. Rinse with clean water if required according to manufacturer’s instruction on the label. Rinsing is not required when using household bleach and water.
6. Let air dry.

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Sanitizers and Disinfectants

- A sanitizer is defined as a substance or preparation for killing germs, designed for use especially on food-processing equipment.

- In kitchens, the sanitizer must contain chlorine, quaternary ammonium or iodine (according to the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 562).

- A disinfectant is defined as a chemical liquid that destroys bacteria. An example would be using a 500ppm disinfecting solution using household bleach to disinfect the diaper change table.

- Purchase a disinfectant that is appropriate for the surface.

- Within the centre, a variety of disinfectants can be used including natural products.

- Not all products are made the same. Some quaternary ammonium products are effective against norovirus while others are not.

- Read the label (if using a pre-mixed commercially available disinfectant) to determine how long it needs to remain on the surface. Some disinfectants require up to 10 minutes of contact time.

- Mix a solution of disinfectant and water that is appropriate for the job. See Disinfection Chart for Child Care Centres (Appendix 4) for mixing instructions using bleach and water.

- Apply disinfectants with a spray bottle to evenly and completely cover a surface.

- Label the spray bottle and keep it out of children’s reach.

- Consult with Public Health prior to switching products if unsure.
Create and follow a cleaning and disinfecting schedule

Post a cleaning and disinfecting schedule in your child care centre. Cleaning and Disinfecting Schedule (Appendix 5) provides an example for you to follow. Clean and disinfect everything as detailed in your cleaning schedule and make sure everyone follows the schedule.

You need to increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting during an outbreak to reduce the spread of germs.

General Hygiene

Every toy, surface and corner of the child care centre must be clean and maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

Bed linens

- Cots and mattresses must be non-absorbent and easy to clean.
- Clean and disinfect cots and mattresses at least once a week and when they are soiled.
- Designate bed linens for every child. No sharing!
- Label bed linens, cots and mattresses with an identifying label (e.g. child’s name, assigned #).
- Store cots and linens in clean dry areas to prevent mould and mildew growth and keep them out of the way of everyday activities.
- Launder bed linens at least once a week and when soiled. Use the hottest setting of the clothes dryer.
- Launder bed linens if a child inadvertently uses another child’s bed or cot.

Combs

- Store children’s personal items in a clean and sanitary enclosure.
- Alternately combs can be cleaned, rinsed and disinfected between each use.

Face cloths and hand wipes

- Use reusable face cloths and hand wipes only once and place them in a laundry basket out of children’s reach. The laundry basket must be non-absorbent and easy to clean.
- Replace cloths when they become torn or worn.

Gardening

Some child care centres are setting up gardens as part of their play activities. Follow these tips for gardening in your centre:

- Supervise children during gardening activities.
- Outdoor gardens should be located in an area safe for children.
- Choose gardening tools and gloves appropriate for children.
- Use soil that does not contain manure (which could expose children to harmful bacteria).
- Consider buying organic or non-treated seeds.
- Avoid using chemical pesticides and/or herbicides.
- When planting outdoors, follow sun protection guidelines found at peelregion.ca/health/getcovered/prot-yself.htm.
- Children and child care providers must wash their hands with soap and water after gardening.
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**Make-up and face painting**
- Do not share make-up or face paint that contacts mucous membranes (e.g. eyes, mouth etc.).
- Apply make-up and face paint with a single-use applicator designated for each child (e.g. cotton swabs).

**Sandboxes**
Indoor sandboxes:
- Use sand that is pre-packaged, sealed and labelled “play sand.”
- Keep all pets and food away from the sandbox.
- Air dry wet play sand overnight.
- Sandbox toys must be rustproof, non-breakable and easy to clean.
- Clean and disinfect the sandbox when replacing the sand.
- Replace sand at least monthly, or more often if required.
- Do not use the sandbox during outbreaks.

Outdoor sandboxes:
- Cover sandboxes when not in use. Discuss specific situations with your public health inspector.
- Replace sand at least seasonally, or more often if required.
- Sandboxes should be visually inspected and raked during daily playground check.

**Sensory and water play tables**
- Choose a table that is easy to move, clean and disinfect.
- Provide a cleaning and disinfecting procedure for sensory play tables.
- Wash, rinse and disinfect the table, individual bins and toys after each play session.
- Ensure children wash their hands before and after using a water play table.
- Keep sick children, including those with open sores or wounds, away from group water play. You can use individual bins for sick children.
- Do not use water play tables during an outbreak.
- Discard water after every use or every couple of hours, whichever is shorter.
- Protect or cover water play tables if room is shared with other groups.
- Discard confetti, paper and other sensory items after a maximum of five uses, or if visibly soiled or wet.
- Discard cereal, rice, pasta, beans and other food products weekly. If the food product becomes wet, it must be discarded and replaced.
- Use discretion when using natural products such as pine cones and leaves. It is the responsibility of the child care centre to assess each item before it is placed in circulation.
- Due to the difficulty cleaning and disinfecting toilet paper rolls, egg cartons and trays previously used to store hazardous food items (e.g., styrofoam meat trays), they should not be used for crafts.
- Clean and disinfect the basin when the sensory material is changed.
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**Toothbrushes**

- Choose a toothbrush with a small head and soft-bristles.
- Clearly label all toothbrushes and toothbrush covers with the child’s name. Do not allow sharing or borrowing.
- If a child uses another child’s toothbrush or if two toothbrushes come in contact, throw them away and give the children new toothbrushes.
- Replace toothbrush every three to four months; sooner when the bristles look worn and bent or after illness.
- Dispense toothpaste in a manner to prevent contamination. For example, place a separate drop of toothpaste on a paper towel for each child, then use a toothbrush to scoop up the toothpaste.

**Twelve steps for Tooth-brushing**

1. Wash your hands and children’s hands.
2. Rinse toothbrush well with water before brushing.
3. Set timer for two minutes.
4. Supervise tooth brushing activities.
5. Encourage children to brush all surfaces of teeth.
6. Children should be encouraged to rinse with water using individual disposable cups or reusable cups which are washed and sanitized after each use.
7. Rinse toothbrush well with water after brushing.
8. Dry toothbrush with paper towel.
9. Cover toothbrush bristles with a ventilated cover.
10. Store toothbrush so they cannot touch another toothbrush while air drying.
11. Sanitize sinks used for tooth brushing.
12. Wash your hands and children’s hands.

**Toothbrush Storage**

- Cover the bristles of the toothbrush with a ventilated cover.
- Store toothbrushes so they cannot touch another toothbrush while air drying.
- Use non-absorbent and easy-to-clean holders. Cloth and cardboard holders are not acceptable.
- Allow air to flow through so that brushes dry completely.
- Do not store in closed containers or plastic sandwich bags.
- Arrange holders so that toothbrushes are not above or below others to prevent contamination by dripping.

The Ontario Government offers FREE programs for regular and emergency dental care for children 0-17 years of age who qualify.

For more information call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 or visit: peelregion.ca/health/dental-health.
Wading pools

- Keep sick children away from the wading pool.
- Do not use a wading pool during an outbreak.
- An alternative would be to use a sprinkler instead of a wading pool for water fun. A sprinkler reduces the risk of exposure to potentially harmful bacteria, viruses and parasites. You can speak to your public health inspector and/or Ministry of Education program advisor if you have any questions about using a sprinkler.

Pets and Animals

Child care centres often have furry friends and other pets either visit or live at the centre, much to the delight of children. If your child care centre chooses to have an animal (resident or visitor), consult the Guidance Document for the Management of Animals in Child Care Centres, 2016.


Pets that live in or visit your child care centre must:
- Come to the centre healthy and have appropriate clearance from a veterinarian.
- Have all up-to-date required rabies vaccinations.
- Be kept away from kitchen areas of the child care centre at all times.

Protect children and animals by remembering a few simple tips:
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling a pet, its food or its belongings.
- Do not allow children to kiss animals or put their face too close to an animal.
- Never allow a child near a dog or cat while it is eating, drinking or sleeping.
- Supervise children when they are handling animals.
- Clean cages and aquariums regularly and maintain them in a clean and sanitary condition.

Wild animals and strays

- Keep children away from stray dogs or cats, or wild animals, such as raccoons, skunks, foxes and especially bats; they could be infected with rabies, but not show any sign of illness.
- Educate children to leave stray animals and wildlife alone; an animal that appears friendly may still bite and healthy wild animals usually want to keep away from people.

Animal bites and scratches

Report all biting or scratching incidents to Peel Public Health so the risk of rabies infection can be assessed. Please note that you are legally required to report any incident of an animal biting a human to Peel Public Health.
If a child is bitten or scratched while at your child care centre, take the following actions:

- Provide immediate medical attention to anyone who is bitten or scratched by a bat, dog, cat, fox, raccoon, skunk or any other mammal (a warm-blooded animal).
- Wash the wound immediately with soap and warm water, then rinse with clean water, and apply an antiseptic.
- Record the event and advise the child’s parent or guardian to seek medical attention for their child. Inform the parent or guardian that you will be reporting the incident to Peel Public Health.
- Report the incident to Peel Public Health.

Collect the following information to share with Peel Public Health

- Pet owner’s name, home and work address, and phone number(s).
- Description of animal (e.g., breed, colour and markings, size, pet name).
- Description of events prior to incident (e.g., pet disturbed, held too tightly or wild animal came up and bit child).
- Names of victim and parent or guardian, address and phone number(s).

**Safe Food Handling**

Food handlers must meet provincial regulatory standards, which cover food storage, food temperatures, food service equipment, food handler hygiene, and structural and building maintenance requirements.

The primary cook or supervisor should be a certified food handler.

**Peel Public Health offers food handler training and certification.**

For more information, call 905-799-7700.

Sick kitchen staff cannot work until they are well. Staff with symptoms of illness must not handle food until they are symptom free for at least 24 hours. Some illnesses mean that staff must be off work until certain laboratory tests come back clear. Please check with your public health inspector for more information.

Child care staff who diaper children cannot work in the kitchen nor do any food preparation during the same shift.

Kitchen staff who also have cleaning duties outside the kitchen cannot perform cleaning duties until after they have finished their food-handling tasks. For example, staff can prepare food in the morning and clean in the afternoon.
Self-serving of food

Children must:

- Wash their hands before eating.
- Be supervised at all times while eating.
- Use clean utensils, not their bare hands when serving food.

Food that becomes contaminated must be discarded immediately. Food can get contaminated by people sneezing, coughing and/or spitting on food. Other examples of food getting contaminated happen when people touch food with their bare hands, and serving utensils (including handles) and foreign objects fall into the food.

During outbreaks, do not let children serve themselves food.

Catering and special event meals

Child care centres that receive catered food should record the temperatures of hazardous foods when they arrive at the centre and again prior to serving. Hot hazardous food is to be delivered and kept at 60°C or above, and cold hazardous food is to be delivered and kept at 4°C or lower. Request that your caterer gives you a copy of their latest public health inspection report of their premises.

Home prepared food must not be served to children. If there is a special event or holiday, and a parent wants to provide special food, the food must be prepared at the child care centre or purchased from an inspected food premises, such as a grocery store or bakery.

For more information on handling food safely, you can download a copy of Ontario Food Premises Regulation 562 at ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900562.
Managing Illnesses

The goal at every child care centre is to keep children healthy. Despite best efforts, illnesses do occur in the child care centre or at home. The first line of defence in managing illnesses involves working with parents and Peel Public Health. If an illness is serious or there’s an outbreak, proper management will involve following policies and procedures for exclusion, reporting and communicating illnesses and outbreaks, enhanced handwashing and thorough cleaning and disinfecting.

**Use signs to communicate your centre’s health status**

Communication is an integral part of successfully managing illness at your child care centre. Peel Public Health has developed signage that communicates to both staff and visitors the current status of the child care centre. Refer to Appendix 8.

Post the appropriate sign at the entrance of the centre.

**Green Healthy sign:** This sign reminds parents and visitors of the importance of handwashing, covering your cough and/or sneeze and keeping ill children at home. This sign remains posted until there is an increase in illness.

**Yellow Illness sign:** This sign notifies parents and visitors of the symptoms the children in the centre are experiencing. This sign also prompts parents to report any symptoms their child may be experiencing. The child care operator posts this sign when there is an increase of illness in the centre.

**Red Outbreak sign:** This sign is posted when the centre is experiencing an outbreak. Peel Public Health will declare the beginning and end of an outbreak in your centre and notify you when the sign can be changed.

Our goal is to increase communication with parents and the child care staff. Through open communication, illness can be addressed in the early stages and potentially stop the occurrence of an outbreak.
How does an Illness Spread?

Illness occurs and spreads when three factors are present: germs, host and method of spread.

Germs
Germs are types of microorganisms that produce an illness. Germs are carried in bodily fluids, including stool, saliva, blood and mucus. Germs that cause gastrointestinal illness (e.g. diarrhea) are found in feces, while germs that cause respiratory illness (e.g. cold or influenza) are found in saliva and mucus.

Host
The host can be a child, staff or any person/animal in the centre. They can spread infectious germs without showing signs and symptoms of illness. A previous infection may offer future protection (natural immunity) to the host.

Method of spread
Germs can spread from one child to another in several ways:

• Direct contact when a contagious child touches another child.
• Indirect contact when a contagious child touches an object such as a toy or surface (e.g., a table or chair.) The germs spread to that object or surface and can survive for several hours to several weeks. The germ can transfer to anyone who touches that object or surface.
• Droplet transmission when a contagious child coughs or sneezes. The germs in droplets of mucus or saliva can travel through the air to another child or surface.
• Consumption of contaminated food and unsafe water.
• Bites or scratches from infected insects or animals.

Handwashing is the single most effective way to reduce the spread of illness in childcare centres.
How Do I Know When There Is An Illness?

Child care staff play an important role in identifying early signs and symptoms of illness in children and staff. You should observe every child for signs or symptoms of illness at the start of every day and throughout the day.

**Seven signs and symptoms of illness to look for:**

1. Unusual behaviour
2. Runny nose, cough or difficulty breathing
3. Vomiting
4. Diarrhea
5. Change in skin colour
6. Rash
7. Fever

Child care staff need to document all symptoms and signs of illness. Use the *Illness Tracking Form (Appendix 6)* to record all symptoms accurately on one piece of paper. The form can be photocopied and used in your child care centre.

**Parents can help**

Child care staff and parents, working in partnership, can help prevent illness and outbreaks. Child care staff should communicate with parents to obtain information on the child’s health and well-being.

**Parents need to:**

- Inform the centre when the child is sick.
- Describe the symptoms the child is experiencing.
- Keep the child away from the centre when they are sick.

**Five steps for illness tracking**

1. Keep one *Illness Tracking Form (Appendix 6)* for every classroom.
2. Use the form to record any symptoms of illness and any absences due to illness.
3. Write the date and child’s name, and check off the applicable symptoms on the form. Indicate if the child is absent or has been sent home.
4. If the child is absent or sent home, record the date when the child returns to the centre.
5. Record the child’s name only once for each occurrence of illness. Make sure all required dates, symptoms, other observations and notes are completed.

*If the child is not well enough to participate comfortably in all activities, the child should not be at the centre and must be excluded.*
Why should our child care centre use the Illness Tracking Form?
The Illness Tracking Form (appendix 6) offers two important benefits: it helps you easily capture and maintain information, as well as keep an eye on trends.

Capture and maintain information
- Child care staff record all symptoms of illness on one form, making it easy to track illnesses.
- Staff can keep the monthly records organized in a labelled file folder or binder for convenient access.

Track trends and respond to changes
At the end of each day, week and month, child care staff will be able to determine the number of sick children and their symptoms.

These numbers can be compared to previous months and years. Child care staff will be able to determine if an outbreak is starting and take steps to prevent the spread of illness.

Staff should consider:
- Is there an unusual increase in the number of children with the same symptoms?
- Is there an unusual symptoms such as bloody diarrhea?

If you answer YES to either question, please call Peel Public Health and discuss your concerns and questions. We would rather deal with a false alarm than with a missed opportunity.

If you suspect that a child has one of the communicable diseases listed on Peel Public Health List of Reportable Diseases (Appendix 7), report it immediately to Peel Public Health.
What Should I Do If Children Are Sick?

Child care centres have certain responsibilities when it comes to sick children. According to the Child Care and Early Years Act, child care centres are required to:

- Separate sick children from well children.
- Note symptoms of illness in the child’s record.
- Contact a parent or guardian to take the sick child home.

Peel Public Health requires that all child care centers have and follow written policies and procedures on:

- Excluding, re-admitting and cohorting sick children and child care staff.
- Reporting communicable diseases and suspected outbreaks to Peel Public Health.

Seven steps for exclusion

1. Separate sick children from well children. Symptomatic children should be placed in the designated isolation area (e.g., sick room).
2. Keep sick children comfortable by providing separate cots and toys. Clean and disinfect cots and toys after use. Do not allow sick children to participate in group water play activities.
3. If possible, designate specific staff to care for sick children. Ideally, child care staff should not care for sick and well children at the same time.
4. Contact parents to pick up sick children and remind them of the exclusion policy.
5. Follow policies and procedures for exclusion periods. The Common Childhood Illnesses booklet covers typical exclusion periods.
6. Update the Illness Tracking Form (appendix 6).
7. Post the Yellow Illness Sign (Appendix 8) or a similar notification at the front entrance of the childcare centre to inform parents and visitors of the symptoms of illness. If necessary, prepare and provide fact sheets or letters to parents.

Exclude a child who has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever AND a combination of other symptoms (e.g., nausea, vomiting)
- Fever AND a body rash
- Diarrhea – two or more liquid stools or a change in the normal pattern of bowel movement (e.g., runny, watery or bloody stools)
- Vomiting – two or more times in the last 24 hours
- Eye discharge – yellow or white
- Severe cough
- Yellowish skin or eyes, or jaundice
- Irritability, continuous crying or requires more attention than can be provided

Report a communicable disease or an unusual increase in symptoms to Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700.
DO NOT exclude a child who has the following illnesses or conditions:

- Chickenpox
- Cold Sores
- Common Cold
- Diaper rash/Thrash (Candidiasis)
- Ear infections
- Hand, Foot and Mouth disease
- Pinworm
- Ringworm
- Strep Throat (Group A Strep including Scarlet Fever)

What to do if a child is sick, but does not need to be excluded:
If a child has an illness, but is well enough to stay in the child care facility or does not have symptoms or an illness that requires exclusion, child care staff must ensure that the:

- Child washes hands more frequently
- Child care staff wash hands more frequently
- Child does not participate in water play
- Child care staff clean and disinfect play areas and toys more often

Sick child care staff
Sick child care staff should not be at work. In fact, exclusion guidelines for sick child care staff are the same as those for sick children. The child care centre should provide staff with the policy for sick employees, which should include when they are expected to stay at home. As well, staff absences and exclusions should be recorded according to the centre's policy.

When staff are well enough to work during an illness, they:

- Must wash hands more frequently
- Should be assigned duties that require less contact with children

What Should I Do When There Is An Outbreak?

Definition of an outbreak
An outbreak is when a greater than expected number of children and child care staff have similar symptoms (e.g., fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, respiratory symptoms) and are sick or absent due to illness in a given period of time.

A warning signal is when 10% of the children are sick with a similar illness. You can use the Illness Tracking Form (Appendix 6) to help determine this.

Some diseases (e.g., measles) should be treated like an outbreak even if there is only one case. If you are unsure whether one case of an illness is an outbreak, call Peel Public Health and ask to speak to a public health inspector.

Early awareness and action is critical in managing an outbreak at your child care centre. You may use the “yellow sign” (Appendix 8) to alert parents to Be Aware if their children are experiencing similar symptoms.
Eleven steps to managing outbreaks

1. Call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 and ask to speak to a public health inspector who will help provide advice and steps necessary to control the outbreak.

2. Fax the Illness Tracking Form (Appendix 6) to your public health inspector at 905-565-9602.

3. Give frequent handwashing reminders to all children and child care staff.

4. In an outbreak of gastroenteritis, save all leftover food (if available) for analysis, as it may be a source of illness. Keep food in the refrigerator. Your public health inspector can arrange to have the food tested.

5. Separate sick children and staff at the child care centre from well children and staff. Ensure that only designated child care staff have contact with the sick children and that the same staff do not assist with the well children.

6. Instruct parents or guardians to take sick children home and to a physician if necessary. Remind everyone, including parents, of the exclusion policy in the child care centre.

7. Enhance cleaning and disinfecting of toys and environmental surfaces.
   - Clean and disinfect thoroughly and more often, and ensure infant and toddler areas get special attention.
   - Ensure cleaning staff are notified that extra cleaning is necessary.
   - Use a disinfectant effective against common outbreak pathogens (Norovirus, rotavirus, etc.).
   - Check the Disinfection Chart for Child Care Centres (Appendix 4) for concentration of bleach and water disinfectant.

8. Stop all group water play for the duration of the outbreak.

9. Post the Red Outbreak Sign (Appendix 8) or a similar notification at the front entrance of the child care centre to inform parents and visitors. Prepare and provide fact sheets or letters to parents.

10. If requested by Peel Public Health, distribute stool kits to collect stool samples during a gastrointestinal outbreak. Peel Public Health will provide the stool kits, along with a letter to parents instructing them on how to use the kits. Contact Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 when stool kits are ready to be picked up.

11. Consult daily with your public health inspector regarding new cases, change in symptoms, lab results, pick-up/drop-off of specimen kits, the need for on-site meetings, etc.

Declaring an outbreak over

Only a public health inspector can officially declare that an outbreak is over and instruct you to remove the Red Outbreak sign and post the Green Healthy sign (Appendix 8) at the front entrance of your child care centre.
Glossary of Terms

**Cohorting**: Isolating several children together who are known to have the same symptoms of illness.

**Communicable disease**: An infectious disease that can spread from one person to another either directly by contact (touching), indirect contact (e.g., contaminated counters, hands, toys, doorknobs, surfaces, objects) or by eating contaminated food or water.

**Cross contamination**: A situation where food becomes unsafe because harmful germs, chemicals or physical objects get into the food. Contamination can occur in three ways: food-to-food, equipment-to-food and people-to-food.

**Disinfectant**: Substances that are applied to non-living objects to reduce the number of germs that are living on the objects.

**Droplet transmission**: Occurs when droplets containing germs travel the air (e.g., by coughing, sneezing, or talking) and land in the eyes, nose or mouth of a another person.

**Exclusion**: The prevention of a person from attending the child care centre. A child should be excluded if he/she is not well enough to participate in activities as usual and/or has any symptoms requiring exclusion from the child care centre. Sick children must be isolated in a separate room or space until they can be picked up by their parents.

**Gastrointestinal illness**: Illness relating to the stomach or intestine.

**Hazardous food**: Any food that is capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic (disease causing) organisms or the production of toxins by such organisms (e.g., foods with high levels of protein, moisture and neutral acidity like meats, dairy, and poultry).

**Host**: A person or other living animal infected by an infectious agent.

**Microorganisms**: Organisms too small to see, such as bacteria and viruses, which can cause an illness.

**Natural immunity**: Immunity to disease that occurs as part of an individual’s natural biologic makeup.

**Pathogen**: A bacterium, virus, or other germ that can cause disease.

References


5) Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11

6) O. Reg. 137/15: GENERAL under Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, S.O. 2014, c. 11

7) Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H-7

8) Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H-7 Revised Regulations of Ontario, Regulation 562

9) Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. h-7 Revised Regulation of Ontario, Regulation 558/91

Appendix 1

Peel Public Health policy and procedure guideline for child care centres

These guidelines will help you create effective policies and procedures for your child care centre. If you require additional support call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 and ask to speak to a Public Health Inspector.

Definitions:

A policy is a plan or course of action used to guide an organization to create decisions.

A procedure is a series of steps that need to be taken to accomplish something.

How to create effective policies and procedures:

• Provide detailed steps by answering: who, what, when, where, why and how (at a minimum) to effectively manage a situation

• Consult credible sources. Do not copy information from other sources! Write your own to best meet the needs of your centre.

• Consult your public health inspector for feedback.

• Inform and train staff on all policies and procedure to ensure they are being followed and staff is responding efficiently.

• Put policies and procedures on letterhead to make them appear professional.

• Refer to information and parts of the parent handbook. Although they are not policies and procedures, the information can be useful when writing policies and procedures.

Policies and Procedures Required by Peel Public Health

1. Exclusion, re-admission and cohorting of ill children and staff

• What daily actions do you take to monitor for illness? (Example: Daily health checks, monitoring and screening for symptoms). Are these recorded in a communications binder, book or on a form?

• What actions will you take when you have ill children and/or ill staff members? (Example: isolate from attending, keep ill children and ill staff together, call parents, consult with a public health inspector if unsure of situation or require additional help, etc.).

• If you are going to isolate, where will you place the ill child and/or ill staff member? Identify this area as your designated isolation area.

• If you are going to cohort ill children and ill staff members, describe where and how that will be done?

• Cohorting means caring for several children and staff together who are known to have the same infection and/or symptoms of illness. Staff and children that are cohorted should have no direct contact with uninfected children and staff. Toys, equipment and other materials are not to be shared.

• What is required by your centre for re-admission? (Example: Doctor’s note, permission from Peel Public Health, when the child is symptom free and well enough to participate in all activities, etc.) These re-admission standards are used when you send a child home due to observed symptoms of illness. The minimum requirement is that the child is symptom free for 24 hours and well enough to participate in all activities.
2. Reporting communicable diseases and suspected outbreaks to Peel Public Health

- What actions will you take when you suspect an outbreak in your centre? What level of illness in your centre is considered an outbreak? Are your staff members trained to recognize an outbreak? You must create a definition for an outbreak that is specific to your centre.

- Peel Public Health’s definition of an outbreak:
  A greater than expected number of children and staff have similar symptoms (fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, respiratory symptoms) and are ill or absent due to illness in a given period of time.

- Identify who, when and how you will report illnesses and outbreaks to Peel Public Health.

- Will you exclude or cohort ill children and/or ill staff members when you suspect an outbreak or when you have multiple individuals with the same symptoms?

- To effectively manage any suspected outbreak, you should always notify the parent or guardian to pick up ill children and send ill staff members home. Report all suspected outbreaks to Peel Public Health and begin a list of all ill children and ill staff members.

- You must report any suspicions of an outbreak as well as an increase in the number of ill children and ill staff members in your centre. To report, call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700. Peel Public Health will declare if and when you are experiencing an outbreak in your centre. Do not call your public health inspector directly as they may not be available and the message will be delayed.

- What additional actions will you take during illnesses and outbreaks to minimize the spread of infection in your centre? (e.g., stop all shared water and sensory play, no toy sharing, increase frequency of hand washing among all children and staff and increase frequency of daily disinfection of high-touch surfaces and toys). When you are in outbreak mode, you may have to switch disinfectants to ensure you are using a disinfectant suitable to the situation. A bleach and water solution is recommended for all types of outbreaks and regular daily use. Consult the chart for mixing disinfectants and contact time details: Disinfection Chart for Child Care Centres (Appendix 4).

- Peel Public Health will also declare when the outbreak is over and when you can resume back to regular activities.

- Do your staff members know what a communicable disease is? Refer to Appendix 7 for a link to the most current list of diseases that must be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health. Peel Public Health recommends that you print and attach the list to this policy and procedure.

- When a child or staff member is ill with a reportable disease, they must be excluded from the centre. Peel Public Health will notify the centre regarding the exclusion. If you are made aware of the reportable illness by a parent or staff member prior to being contacted by Peel Public Health, report the illness to Peel Public Health (905-799-7700) and ask to speak to a public health inspector as soon as possible. Peel Public Health will take the lead regarding the exclusion and re-admission of the ill child or staff member to the centre.

3. Communication of illnesses and outbreaks to parents of children

- How will you communicate with parents regarding what you are observing in your centre? Will you post a sign advising parents of the illnesses and outbreaks at the front door? You can use the signs found in Appendix 8

- Will you send a letter home with the children? What will you include in the letter? Peel Public Health recommends that you have a letter template ready to go in the event of an outbreak. Print and attach a sample letter to this policy and procedure.

4. Routine procedures for handling blood and body fluids and recording incidences

- Body fluids include blood, urine, feces, vomit, mucus such as nasal drainage and phlegm etc. How will you clean these body fluids from surfaces in your centre? Provide step by step procedure for cleaning.
• Do you have a recording form or log book to document these incidences?
• Consult the Disinfecting Chart for Child Care Centres (Appendix 4) for mixing disinfectants and contact time details.
• Peel Health recommends that you provide a spill kit to clean up blood and body fluids. The spill kit includes a pail, disposable gloves, disposable paper towels, 5.25% bleach solution, and a procedure for clean up. You can post the procedure in the same area where disinfectants are stored and mixed or another convenient spot so you can easily access the procedure when you need it.

5. Contingency plans for emergency situations
• Emergency situations such as but not limited to: fires, power outages, sewage back-up, no heat, no water or water interruption must be planned for in advance.
• Identify what actions you will take in the event any of the above mentioned emergencies take place at your centre.
• Actions you will take must be stated in step by step format.
• If you are going to evacuate to a nearby location identify the full name, address and phone number of the emergency evacuation site.
• Notify Peel Public Health of your emergency. Call 905-799-7700 and ask to speak to a public health inspector.
• For information about what needs to be included in a fire safety plan, contact your local Fire Department Fire Prevention officer or refer to the Ontario Fire Code section 2.8 Emergency Planning. It is available online at ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r07213.

6. Cleaning and disinfection procedure for toys, pet cages, furniture and other high touch areas
• Provide detailed steps for cleaning and disinfection.
• What is cleaned and how? What products are used to clean and disinfect?
• How is the disinfectant mixed? Consult Appendix 4 chart for mixing disinfectants and contact time details.
• Where is the cleaning and disinfecting done in the centre?
• Who is responsible to clean and disinfect?
• How often to clean and disinfect?
• Create a cleaning schedule for every classroom. Clearly identify areas that are to be cleaned and the frequency of cleaning. You can split the cleaning schedule to reflect four areas: after every use, daily, weekly and monthly.

7. Diapering procedure
• Post diapering procedure at every diapering station.
• Ensure staff members are trained and follow diapering procedure accurately.

8. Sensory and water play table
• Post sensory/water play table cleaning procedure at the water/sensory play station area.
• Ensure to provide step by step cleaning and disinfection of water play table and toys.
• Indicate how often sensory materials are changed.
9. Management of animals in child care centres

Use the Guidance Document (peelregion.ca/health/infectioncontrol/pdf/management-ofanimals child-care-centres-may-2016.pdf) to develop a policy and procedures specific to the resident animal(s) and/or animals visiting your centre.

Outline all infection prevention and control measures related to animal contact such as but not limited to:

- Post sensory/water play table cleaning procedure at the water/sensory play station area.
- Ensure to provide step by step cleaning and disinfection of water play table and toys.
- Indicate how often sensory materials are changed.

Appendix 2

Handwashing poster

1. Wet our hands..
2. ..Soap our hands..
3. ..Wash our hands..
4. ..Rinse our hands..
5. ..Dry our hands..
6. ..use paper towels to turn off taps..

Let’s wash our hands!

Good-Bye Germs!
Cleaning-Up Blood and Body Fluids

Protect your eyes, nose and mouth from blood or body fluids when cleaning up spills by turning your face away or wearing a face mask.

1. Put on disposable rubber gloves.
2. Soak-up the spill with paper towels.
3. Wash the area with detergent and water.
4. Disinfect the area with a strong (1:10) bleach solution. Mix 125mL of bleach with 1L of water and allow 2 minutes contact time.
5. Safely discard all paper towels and gloves in the garbage.
6. Wash your hands with soap and water.

Do your part! STOP the spread of illness.
## Appendix 4

### Disinfection Chart for Child Care Centres

Make disinfecting solutions using household bleach (5.25%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Child Care Surfaces</th>
<th>Blood and Body Fluids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 PPM*</td>
<td>500 PPM*</td>
<td>5000 PPM*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitizer used for dishwashing.</td>
<td>Sanitizer used for utensils which are too large to be washed in a sink or dishwasher.</td>
<td>Intermediate level disinfectant used for toys, diapering stations, water play stations, pet cages, and high touch surfaces within the centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mix</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tsp of bleach with 4 cups of water or 4 ml of bleach with 1 litre of water</td>
<td>2 tsp of bleach with 4 cups of water or 10 ml of bleach with 1 litre of water</td>
<td>½ cup of bleach with 4 cups of water or 125 ml of bleach with 1 litre of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contact Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contact Time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 seconds</td>
<td>45 seconds</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 minutes</td>
<td>2 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Concentration is approximate due to simplification of mixing recipe.

### Additional Notes:

- Clean all surfaces and items with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Make a new bleach solution daily.
- Prepare bleach solution with room temperature water to reduce odour.
- Label all disinfectant and cleaning product bottles.
- Use the stream setting on spray bottles to reduce inhalation hazards.
- Do not mix bleach solutions with any other cleaning products.
- Store all disinfectants and cleaning products in a location inaccessible to children.
- Avoid using disinfectants and cleaning products within close proximity to children.
Appendix 5

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Schedule**

These are minimum recommendations and apply to normal operating conditions. During an outbreak of a communicable disease, extra cleaning and disinfecting will be necessary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOYS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small toys that go into mouth</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large toys</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress up clothes</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Clean (launder) → dry on hottest setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hats/headwear</td>
<td>After each play session</td>
<td>Clean (wipe or dry on hottest setting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLEEP AREAS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crib rails</td>
<td>Daily, if crib is used or shared by other kids</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → wait several minutes → wipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding/linens</td>
<td>Weekly for “trained”. Change daily if crib/bed is used by other kids.</td>
<td>Launder and dry on hottest temperature setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crib mattress</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLAY AREAS/SURFACES</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dining table tops</td>
<td>Before and after meals</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floors – tiles, vinyl</td>
<td>Daily in infant and toddler areas and eating areas.</td>
<td>Launder and dry on hottest temperature setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly in other areas</td>
<td>Clean with soap and water → vacuum</td>
<td>Steam clean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small rugs</td>
<td>Twice weekly</td>
<td>Vacuum or launder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOILET and POTTY CHAIRS</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toilet bowls</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Clean → toilet bowl cleaner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet seats and rims</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flushing handle, door knobs, counters, faucets</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potty chair</td>
<td>After each use</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → air dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaper change surface</td>
<td>After each use</td>
<td>Clean → disinfect → wipe dry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do your part! **STOP** the spread of illness
## ILLNESS TRACKING FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Child’s Name</th>
<th>First Date of Symptoms</th>
<th>Abdominal Cramps</th>
<th>Blood in Stool</th>
<th>Chills</th>
<th>Coughing</th>
<th>Diarrhea</th>
<th>Eye Irritations/ Discharge</th>
<th>Fever</th>
<th>Headache</th>
<th>Looks Flushed/ Jaundice</th>
<th>Muscle Aches</th>
<th>Skin Rash</th>
<th>Sore Throat</th>
<th>Vomiting</th>
<th>Other Comments and Observations (Fever temperature and time taken, other symptoms)</th>
<th>Child Absent</th>
<th>Child Sent Home</th>
<th>Date of Return</th>
<th>Staff Initials</th>
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Appendix 7

Communicable Diseases Surveillance

The Ontario Reportable Diseases Regulation (Ontario Regulation 559/91 as amended, made under the Health Protection and Promotion Act) requires certain communicable diseases to be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health. In Peel Region, these notifications are to be reported to Peel Health Communicable Diseases Surveillance.

The most current list of diseases that must be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health can be found at peelregion.ca/health/pdfs/reportable-diseases.pdf.
Preventing and Managing Illnesses in Child Care Centres

Appendix 8

**KEEP OUR CENTRE HEALTHY**

- Wash your hands
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Keep sick children at home

**Be Aware**

**We Are Currently Experiencing:**

- Abdominal Pain
- Chills
- Coughing
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea
- Skin Rash
- Sneezing
- Vomiting
- _______________
- _______________

**Wash your hands frequently**
**Report symptoms of illness to staff**
**Keep sick children at home**

**We Have An OUTBREAK**

**We Are Currently Experiencing:**

- Abdominal Pain
- Chills
- Coughing
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Headache
- Nausea
- Skin Rash
- Sneezing
- Vomiting
- _______________
- _______________

**Wash your hands frequently**
**Report symptoms of illness to staff**
**Keep sick children at home**
Do your part! **STOP** the spread of illness

For more information contact Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 or toll-free at 1-888-919-7800. peelregion.ca/health