



### Toys & Magazines in Waiting Areas

#### Toys:

Toys in public areas such as waiting rooms may become contaminated and act as reservoirs for potentially pathogenic microorganisms.

A monitoring and regular cleaning and disinfection schedule needs to be maintained to decrease the risk of cross-contamination from toys to children and vice versa.

Cleaning and disinfection schedules are difficult to maintain and for this reason IPAC recommends that there be **no communal toys in waiting rooms**.

If a decision is made to keep toys in waiting rooms, each practitioner or clinical area must assume responsibility for selecting, cleaning and disinfecting the toys.

#### Recommendations:

1. Toys selected for waiting rooms must be nonporous and cleanable (no plush, wooden, or paper toys/books and toys should not be capable of retaining water).
2. Toys are considered non-critical/semi-critical devices (touch intact skin and mucous membranes: especially in younger children who have frequent oral contact with hands, toys and environmental surfaces) and therefore require low/intermediate level disinfection between use by each child.
3. Frequently touched play surfaces (playhouses, play tables) in waiting rooms should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily.

#### Cleaning/Disinfection Criteria:

1. Written procedures regarding frequency and methods of cleaning should be developed.
2. Create 'dirty' versus 'clean' areas for toys (e.g. plastic bins with lids for dirty toys).
3. Clean visibly soiled toys with detergent prior to disinfection.
4. Only use non-toxic disinfectants. Submersing or wiping toys with a hospital approved low-level disinfectant solution or pre-moistened wipe is sufficient.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for use. Note: No *phenolic* disinfectants should be used on toys or surfaces touched by children.

5. Toys require rinsing with clean water after disinfection and air-drying or towel-drying with a clean towel.
6. Dishwashers may be used to sanitize toys if available.
7. Trained staff must be assigned responsibility for daily toy/toy box cleaning and maintenance.

#### Magazines:

There is very little reliable evidence to suggest that magazines in waiting rooms pose a significant infection risk.

It is reasonable to conclude however that handling of magazines without proper hand hygiene could lead to the transmission of some microorganisms. Therefore, alcohol based hand rub should be available and its use by members of the public/patients encouraged.

If magazines are kept in waiting areas, they should be discarded when visibly soiled and at regular intervals. Binders or protective coverings on magazines are not recommended unless they can be cleaned. Donation of used magazines for patient use is not recommended.

#### References:

- IWK Health Centre (2009). Infection Prevention and Control. Toy Cleaning and Disinfection. Policy IC 215.2
- Nova Scotia Department of Health (2010). Infection Prevention and Control Centre Nova Scotia. Recommendations for Toys in Offices and Waiting Rooms.
- Ontario Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (2009). Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings, p.83-84.