

Risks of a Bite

Biting is a normal behavior for young children, and can be a common in child care settings. Most bites are harmless and do not break the skin. If the skin is broken, and there is blood, infections are rare.

The child care facility should have policies to assist staff to manage a biting incident, including:

- Managing bites (and other potential exposures to blood and body fluids)
- Training on care of wounds that may result from bites
- When and how parents need to be informed of a bite incident and the recommended follow up

Prevention of Bites

Young children are learning self-control. Some things that can be done to prevent biting incidents include:

- Avoid stressful situations, frustrations and conflicts
- Reinforce “no biting” rules often with children
- Show children how to express their frustration with words like “no”
- Redirect or distract if you see a problem developing with a play-mate
- Pay attention to the victim, not the biter
- Observe the circumstances of how, when and why a child bites to help guide management
- Talk to the parent/guardian if a child is biting frequently as an individualized approach may be necessary

First Aid Care for Bites

If the skin is NOT broken:

- Clean the area with soap and water, and apply a cold compress (cool damp cloth or ice pack) to the bite
- Provide emotional support to the child

If the skin is broken:

- Allow the wound to bleed (do not squeeze the wound), then clean the wound with soap and water
- Notify the parent/guardian of both the biter and the victim as soon as possible (preferably within 2 hours of the incident)
- Report the bite to Public Health by faxing the completed the ‘Child Care Biting Incident Notification Form’
- Provide the ‘Bites in Child Care Information Sheet for Parent or Guardian’ to the parent/guardian of both the biter and the victim
- Advise the parent/guardian of both the biter and the victim to contact Public Health or their doctor/nurse practitioner as soon as possible after the incident.

References: http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/biting_in_child_care

