



## Safeguarding Your Health

Child care workers are exposed to a wide variety of infectious diseases. These include the vaccine preventable diseases of measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, whooping cough (pertussis), and the flu. Child care workers are also exposed to diseases with no vaccines such as fifth disease and hand, mouth, and foot disease. Some of these diseases cause severe illness in adults and some, such as rubella, chickenpox, measles, fifth disease, and flu can be dangerous for pregnant women and their unborn children.

Most adults have been vaccinated for or have natural immunity to these diseases.



However, if you've never had any of these diseases, haven't been vaccinated, or are planning a pregnancy, here are some steps to protect your health:

- Ask your doctor to check your immunity for measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, and fifth disease. This involves a simple blood test that will show if you have antibodies to the disease.
- Get a MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) booster shot if you were born after 1970; wait three months before getting pregnant.
- Get a booster shot of pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine. The pertussis vaccine wears off in late childhood leaving adults at risk for infection.
- Get an annual flu shot and the H1N1 flu shot this year.

For more information about the diseases and your level of risk, go to [www.wehealthunit.org](http://www.wehealthunit.org) and check out the A-Z topics.

## Healthy Bodies

### Reduce the Spread of Infection

All viruses are spread through coughing, sneezing, and coming in contact with infected surfaces like doorknobs and toys. To stop infection from spreading in the day care, disinfect toys and common surfaces often. Also make up a game to teach children good hygiene and coughing etiquette. Encourage them to:

- Cough into their sleeves and not into their hands.
- Wash their hands after sneezing, coughing, blowing their noses, and after going to the bathroom.

Hand sanitizers with 70% alcohol content are effective at reducing infections and can be used with strict supervision. The fact sheet by the Ontario Poison Control Centre at: <http://www.ontariopoisoncentre.com/ontariopoisoncentre/custom/HandSanitizersFactSheetpdf> tells you how to use hand sanitizer safely. Keep the hand sanitizer in a locked cupboard to prevent unintentional poisoning.

To download posters on handwashing go to: <http://www.wehealthunit.org/diseases-conditions/stop-the-spread>

## Health and Learning

### Reportable Diseases:



Safeguarding the health of the public requires the careful and accurate tracking of infectious diseases that could spread quickly in our communities. The role of collecting and monitoring these infectious diseases falls to public health units. They require physicians, hospitals, day cares, and other organizations to assist them in this effort.

As a child care worker, you're required by law to report a number of infectious diseases. It's easy to forget what diseases are reportable. To help you remember, review the resource: *A Guide to Common Infections* available online at: [http://www.wehealthunit.org/diseases-conditions/guide-to-common-infections/GuideComInfections\\_2008.pdf](http://www.wehealthunit.org/diseases-conditions/guide-to-common-infections/GuideComInfections_2008.pdf).

This guide provides information on many different types of infectious diseases, how to prevent the spread of the diseases, what to do if a child in your care is infected with a disease, and what diseases you must report to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

## Health and Development

### Fifth Disease and Pregnancy:

Fifth disease is caused by the human parvovirus, B19. About half of all adults have been exposed during childhood and are immune. A mother's immunity protects her unborn child. If a pregnant woman becomes infected, she will usually have only mild symptoms with no ill effects to her baby. However, in about five percent of cases, severe anemia (low level of red blood cells) can develop in the baby which can result in a miscarriage. There are no other known birth defects linked to the virus.

Contact your family doctor if you're pregnant and believe you have been exposed to the virus. The doctor can do a blood test to see if you're immune. If you're not immune but aren't infected, you will need to avoid exposure to the virus as there is no vaccine. If you're infected, your pregnancy must be closely followed by your doctor.



### Upcoming EVENTS

#### H1N1 Vaccine Clinics

For flu clinics in your area go to: <http://www.wehealthunit.org>

#### Pregnant?

Check out our prenatal classes to learn about:

- Your body's changes during pregnancy.
- Your labour and delivery.
- Your baby's growth.

Classes can be done online or in groups. Classes are free and they begin in your second trimester. For more information and how to register go to: [http://www.wehealthunit.org/family.health/pregnancy/articles/during/prenatal\\_education\\_opportunities](http://www.wehealthunit.org/family.health/pregnancy/articles/during/prenatal_education_opportunities)

### Do you have questions you'd like answered?

For more information contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

Phone: 519-258-2146 ext. 1350 (Intake Nurse)

Website: [www.offtoagreatstart.org](http://www.offtoagreatstart.org)

Address: 1005 Ouellette Ave.

Windsor, ON N9A 4J8



Share this information with your parents.