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# Quality Care For Kids

A newsletter for Child Care Providers  
(written by Jane Matzen, RN and Heidi Hotvedt, RN)

NOVEMBER 2015



Call your Child  
Care Nurse  
Consultant if you  
have any  
questions about  
child health and  
safety, or any  
special training  
needs.



## Strep Throat

Strep throat is a disease caused by group A Streptococcus bacteria. The signs of strep throat are:

Sore throat  
Fever  
Stomachache  
Headache  
Swollen neck glands  
Loss of appetite

Children who are less than 3 years of age with strep throat will only rarely have a sore throat. They commonly have runny nose, fever, irritability and loss of appetite.

Strep throat is spread from person to person by direct contact and by respiratory droplets when someone sneezes or coughs. It usually takes about 2-5 days for symptoms to develop once a person is exposed.

The following actions can help control the spread of strep throat.

1. **Report** to staff and parents that a child in the child care group has strep throat so they can watch for symptoms.
2. **Go to doctor's office** if a child/adult has a severe sore throat with a rash or a severe sore throat that lasts more than 24 hours.
3. **Wash your hands.** Staff, children and all visitors should wash their hands upon arrival for the day, after breaks, or when moving from one child care group to another. **Hand washing should be done before and after:** preparing food or beverages; eating, handling food, or feeding a child; giving

medication; water play; and diapering.

**Hand washing should be done after:** Using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet; handling body fluid (mucus, blood, vomit); wiping and blowing noses; cleaning/using chemicals; and handling garbage.

4. **Adequate cleaning and disinfecting** in the child care environment.

**A child or staff member with strep throat needs to be excluded from care. They can return to care:**

- ◆ When they are fever free.
- ◆ After 24 hours of antibiotic treatment.
- ◆ When the child is able to participate comfortably in activities and the staff determines that they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of other children in care. For more information contact your local nurse consultant.

## Whooping Cough

**What is Whooping Cough (Pertussis) and why is the disease so dangerous for infants?**

Whooping cough is a highly contagious bacterial infection. Infants get whooping cough by breathing in the bacteria in the air caused from people with the disease coughing and sneezing.

Infants are too young to be fully vaccinated and the disease can be severe. Infants with whooping cough can have coughing fits until the air is gone from their lungs and they're forced to inhale with a loud "whooping sound." The coughing is so severe it may cause vomiting, gagging, gasping, and loss of breath. About half of infants less than 1 year of age with whooping cough are hospitalized and a few infants die from it.

**What immunizations are recommended for child care providers in contact with infants younger than 12 months of age?**

One Tdap vaccination is recommended. Tdap is a vaccine for adolescents and adults that provides protection against Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Whooping Cough (Pertussis). Iowa Department of Public Health recommends that child care providers of infants also receive yearly influenza (flu) vaccination.

**Where can I receive the Tdap and flu vaccine?**

These immunizations are offered at your local doctor's office, public health office, and even at some pharmacies. Call ahead to check on insurance coverage, any out-of-pocket costs, and schedule an

**Have you seen the new Iowa Department of Public Health Healthy Child Care Website? The website has many health and safety forms, posters and resources available for child care providers.**

**Check it out at  
[www.idph.iowa.gov/hcci](http://www.idph.iowa.gov/hcci)**