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Fact Sheet on Hand Sanitizers



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Hand Sanitizers...Are considered to be highly effective in preventing the spread of infection within health care facilities and are endorsed by a number of agencies including: CDC (Centre for Disease Control), WHO (World Health Organization), PHAC (Public Health Agency of Canada) etc.

These sanitizers are also convenient when soap and water is not readily available.

Their use in school/daycare settings has been shown to reduce the number of days of absenteeism and the number of infections.

To be effective, these sanitizers are ethyl alcohol based. As they are highly concentrated, little volume is necessary to cause a toddler to become inebriated. Depending on the weight of the child (10-15 kg), as little as 10-15 mL (2-3 teaspoons), are all that is necessary.

Alcohol can be absorbed when ingested and when applied to the skin.

Because alcohol can be toxic, and very small volumes of highly concentrated hand sanitizer are needed to make a toddler intoxicated, it is imperative that these necessary hand sanitizers be kept out the reach of children and their use be supervised at all times.

When using the sanitizer in the day care or school setting, the child should be supervised. A single "squirt" should be spread over the hands and then allowed to completely dry. The alcohol is evaporated and no further risk of absorption then exists. Licking of the hands after the sanitizer is dry carries NO chance of alcohol intoxication.

An alternative convenient solution also includes sanitizer wipes, adequately wet and with high alcohol concentrations. These must also be used supervised with the day care worker assisting the child to cover all surfaces of their hands with the wipe, allowing the alcohol to completely dry and disposing of used wipes in a child resistant container.

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