

The Clown Club

Health Protocol¹

Part of Risk Inventory & Evaluation,
RI&E

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Introduction

Young children are a vulnerable group. Efforts to maintain good health are necessary. Not only for parents, but also adults involved in the care of children need to be aware of the health risks children are exposed to.

There are different areas of health risks, for example unhealthy inside air, floating micro dust and substances which can cause bronchial disorders. It is good to have background information to help better understand why certain things have to be done. This information is important for staff members and students working in day care.

The immune system of young children is still developing and therefore children are a vulnerable group. Their health can be at risk:

1. by transmitting germs
2. because of the indoor environment
3. because of the outdoor environment
4. because of medical treatment or lack of medical treatment

These health risks are described in this protocol as well as the methods used at The Clown Club in dealing with them. The protocol is also a part of the Risk Inventory and Evaluation, RI&E. The RI&E is evaluated on a yearly base. All staff members of The Clown Club are expected to follow this protocol.

1. Health risks due to transmission of germs

Children in day care centres have a higher risk of contracting infectious illnesses, mostly through contact with other children, but also through the collective use of toys. Children come into contact with germs or micro-organisms at an early age. At this point they have not built up a good immune system. A child spreads germs even if the child does not show signs of being ill, therefore consistent good hygienic practices are necessary to reduce the transmission of germs as much as possible. The biggest factors in the spread of infectious diseases are contact, care and activities these together with poor hygiene.

Micro-organisms can multiply in the right conditions. They only need damp and food, in the form of contaminated skin, dust and dirt. Temperatures between 10°C and 50°C are ideal for micro-organism to grow into big numbers.

Good hygiene is absolutely necessary to prevent infections and to limit the number of harmful micro-organisms. In this way children become sick less often and seriously.

Micro-organisms can spread through:

- Hands
- The air (in drops because of coughing or dust)
- Water and food
- Objects such as toys, the lavatory pan, a doorknob or sheets
- Bodily fluids (such as vomit, faeces, wound fluid or blood)
- Animals

General work methods:

Good hygiene is very important and health risks can be reduced by paying extra attention to hygiene. At The Clown Club we do this by:

- paying attention to personnel hygiene, for example hand hygiene
- making sure the living environment is clean
- preventing risky behaviour that causes multiplication of micro-organisms
- using food in a responsible way
- taking care of wounds
- applying protocol for medicine use

1.1 Hand hygiene

Often germs are transmitted by our hands. For that reason, one of the most effective ways of preventing infections is using proper hand hygiene. **This means that hands should be washed with water and soap, at the correct location. So, after visiting the toilet do not wash your hands in the kitchen. There is a sink present in every toilet.**

Work method:

Wash hands before:

- preparing food
- eating or helping with eating
- taking care of wounds

Wash hands after:

- coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose
- visiting the toilet
- changing a child
- contact with bodily fluid, such as saliva, snot, vomit, faeces, wound fluid or blood
- contact with dirty textiles and trashcan
- cleaning activities
- eating (snack, lunch)
- playing outside

Use disposable gloves when there is a chance you may come in contact with potentially contaminated body fluids (such as faeces with blood, wound fluid or blood). After using gloves, wash hands with water and soap and dry with a paper towel.

1.2 Cough and sneeze discipline

Through coughing and sneezing germs can be spread in the air (by invisible saliva particles). Others breathe this in and can be infected in this way. Contamination can also occur by your hands, when they are not washed after coughing or sneezing. Contamination also occurs through contact with saliva and nasal mucus.

Work method:

- wash hands with water and soap after coughing/sneezing and dry hands with a paper towel
- wipe away saliva and snot with a tissue; use a new tissue for every child, not the same tissue for more children and after that wash hands with water and soap and dry hands with a paper towel

1.3 Changing/ sanitary/ toilet hygiene

Changing a baby's diaper brings risks, because of the direct contact with faeces. To prevent spread of germs, children should be changed at the place intended for it. **Changing diapers and preparing food should take place at two different places.** General cleaning of the changing mat is sufficient. Only when there is a contamination from blood or bloody diarrhoea is disinfection needed.

Work method:

General cleaning:

- use 'allesreiniger', diluted 1 to 10 in a spray bottle; this must be made fresh every morning in a dry bottle.
- disinfection: **after** general cleaning, you clean the area with 70% alcohol.

Your hands and toilet facilities can become contaminated because of faeces contain germs. All the surfaces in the toilet area are prone to contamination. When the surfaces are touched by dirty hands, surfaces like the faucet, towel dispenser, and the light switch or the doorknob, they become contaminated. These surfaces function as a transmitter of germs. So, it is of great importance that you wash your hands and the hands of children after using the toilet in the proper location (in the toilet room and **not** in the kitchen after toilet use). Also, children need to learn to wash their hands after using the toilet. It is recommended to use paper towels to dry your hands. The toilet seats and

potties (if used) have to be cleaned with 'allesreiniger', diluted 1 to 10, after every toilet round (see above).

1.4 Food safety

The children's health is also protected by using proper food preparation technics when preparing their food. The "Warenwet Hygiëne van levensmiddelen" is used for this. In addition, The Clown Club has a "Food protocol" in which guidelines concerning storage, preparing and serving food is written down. Cleaning up and washing up also play an important role in this.

Work methods:

- Wash hands of children and yourself with water and soap before snack/lunch. After eating hands are cleaned again, and also the faces.
- Use separate face cloths for every child. After use the face cloths are put in the laundry. This also happens with bibs.
- Food, delivered cooled, has to be stored cooled immediately. Food that is stored cooled has to be taken out of the refrigerator just before use and **only** the amount that will be used.

Stricter rules apply to baby food, because they are a more vulnerable group. You can find specific guidelines in de "Food Protocol".

Work methods (a summary):

- Formula prepared at home may not be accepted by the teachers (and not given)
- Breast milk must be brought in cooled. Frozen breast milk needs to be defrosted in the refrigerator or under running tap water ($\pm 20^{\circ}$ C). Don't put it directly in the milk warmer.
- Every child has their own bottle and nipple. The bottle and nipple must be rinsed and cleaned immediately after use. They also have to be sterilized every day.
- Do not use prepared formula milk if it is more than one hour old (see "Food protocol" for more information).

1.5 Taking care of wounds

Children with skin rashes will often have little wounds, which have a bigger chance to become infected and contaminate the environment. The best way to prevent contamination is to cover the wounds with plasters. Use disposable gloves when taking care of wounds or when cleaning areas with blood. Wash hands with water and soap afterwards.

Sometimes children do not want a plaster. In these cases it is important to keep the wound clean and dry.

1.6 Other possibilities to get in contact with germs

- Children can come in contact with germs through contact with garbage cans. The garbage cans must have a lid and be emptied once a day at least. The teachers need to make sure that the children are not playing with the garbage cans or are digging in it.
- Children can come in contact with germs by using a dirty dishcloth, tea-towel and hand towel. Dishcloths, tea-towels and hand towels have to be replaced by a clean one every day, preferably after the morning and again in the afternoon. Obviously dirty cloths and towels should be changed right away.
- Children consider every pacifier as their own, especially the younger ones. It is important to clean and sterilize pacifiers and nipples every day. The older children use their pacifier only when they go to bed and these are sterilized regularly. Pacifiers and nipples must be kept in a container with divided areas so they do not touch.
- Sleeping bags are worn on top of the children's clothes and are washed after use. Bed sheets are washed weekly. Cuddly toys and toys made of fabric have to be washed very regularly, especially when younger children use them (at least once a month).
- Beds and stretchers have to be cleaned on a weekly basis.
- In summer time children may only play in the swimming pool if wearing a diaper or swim suit. No drinking and eating when playing in the swimming pool (see "Outside play protocol").
- Children can come in contact with germ through dirty toys and furniture. Visible dirt has to be removed/ cleaned immediately. The groups use a cleaning schedule in order to create a clean environment for the children and teachers. This way everything is cleaned regularly.
- Children can come in contact with germs through (faeces of) vermin or by being bitten and scratched by animals. Teachers need to look out for faeces (for example in the sand box) and should respond accordingly. In situations where vermin have been detected, an expert will be called (discuss this with the management). Pets are not allowed in The Clown Club.

2. Health risks because of the environment inside

The air inside contains many substances which can damage the health. Therefore, it is very important that teachers know where these substances are coming from, what a healthy (inside) environment is and how to achieve this.

2.1 Healthy (inside) environment:

Healthy air means having clean air, fresh air, few dust particles and micro-organisms in the air, temperature that is not too hot or cold, and humidity that is not too high or low. This can be achieved by making sure that the ventilation systems are properly used. Having a good ventilation system is therefore important in order to create a healthy environment. When an area is not being ventilated properly, a lot of germs become present in the air, therefore increasing the risks of infection diseases.

When the ventilation is not sufficient, this can lead to

- Headaches
- Irritated eyes and mucous membranes
- Asthmatic complaints
- Feeling ill
- Allergies
- Inflammation of bronchial tubes
- Other infections
- Poisonings

2.2 Ventilation

A good temperature and humidity balance is important in preventing micro-organisms from multiplying and reduced the chance of contamination. The temperature in the rooms should be between minimum of 17°C and maximum of 27°C. The perfect temperature is 20°C. In the bedroom, the ideal temperature is 17°C and should not be under 15°C, otherwise condensation will occur. The consequence of this is that mattresses become wet and mouldy. In the bedroom, the temperature is very important (think of, for example, that too high temperature can cause cot death).

Also, CO₂ levels are very important and therefore should be measured regularly. The Clown Club has two CO₂ meters; these meters are placed in a group for two weeks in a row to measure the CO₂ value. The teachers record the CO₂ value at different times of the day and in different areas. This way the ventilation behaviour can be adjusted.

By repeating these measurements in every group on a regular base, the teachers can recognize a pattern in when, at what moment, time and/or during which activity they have to ventilate extra.

Inside there are many sources of humidity, such as dryers, mop water and persons. This humidity causes condensation that can lead to multiplication of mites and moulds. High humidity can increase the survival of some germs. So here also it turns out that good ventilation is important.

Work methods:

- Open the windows in the morning at arrival
- Open the windows during busy activities
- Open the windows during sleep time
- Open the windows during outside play
- Open the windows during cleaning
- Turn on the ventilation system in de sleeping room at arrival

2.3 Cleaning

Cleaning is of great importance because,

- most of the micro-organisms are removed this way.
- the breeding ground for micro-organisms is taken away.
- the number of dust particles is lowered (the presence of many dust particles can cause breathing problems).
- washing at 60°C lowers the number of mites and substances causing allergic reactions; this not only applies for bed sheets but for playpen sheets, cuddly toys, dressing up clothes too.

Cleaning regularly is therefore of great importance!!!!

This can be easily done by using 'allesreiniger' diluted 1 to 10. Disinfection has to be done only if the surface has been contaminated with blood, such as contamination caused by bloody diarrhoea or in special situations (the "GGD" gives advice about this). First a thoroughly general cleaning has to occur, followed by disinfection with alcohol 70%.

Visible contamination has to be taken care of immediately. Surfaces and materials can also become contaminated invisibly, which makes it even more important that cleaning is being done periodically. See cleaning schedules according to the guidelines of the "GGD". Every group has a cleaning schedule.

Work methods:

- vacuum the floor daily
- mop the floor daily
- clean the furniture (chairs, tables) daily, also between and under the furniture
- clean the toys regularly, follow the cleaning schedule

Preferably, the cleaning should be done when children are not present in the area (for example when they are playing outside or during sleep time). If this is not possible then the children have to be separated from the cleaning activities. Ventilate well during cleaning.

2.3 Additional risks

By using spray cans children can be exposed to volatiles. In rooms where children are present, it is not allowed to use spray cans for example deodorant or air refresher. Volatiles can also be present in glue and white spirit. Glue used at The Clown Club is made on water base. White spirit is not used and present in rooms where the children are.

Exposing children to noise can also be harmful for their health. Be alert to this and plan noisily activities carefully.

Pets and plants can cause allergic reactions. To rule this out, no pets are aloud in The Clown Club. Plants are also not present inside. When a teacher gets flowers then these are taken home the same day. If a child shows any allergic reaction for these flowers, they will be put away somewhere else immediately (for example in the staff room).

3. Health risks because of the environment outside

A number of environmental factors have an influence on health.

- plants and trees can cause allergic reactions by spreading pollen
- stings and bites of vermin

3.1 Plants and trees

It is not possible to prevent children from being exposed to trees and plants. Inside The Clown Club the plants are always taken into account.

3.2 Wasps, bees, ticks

Staff must always be alert to the presence of bees and wasps and if necessary take measures against this (for example do not let children play outside with sticky hands).

Work methods for a bite from a bee or wasp:

- take the sting out and suck out the poison with a special syringe
- cool the wound to prevent swelling

Work method for a tick bite:

- after a bite, the tick has to be removed with a pair of tweezers special for ticks followed by disinfection with alcohol 70%
- parents must always be informed

The special syringe and the pair of tweezers are in the electrical cupboard, at the entrance, on the left.

3.3 Hygiene in sandboxes

The most harmful contamination being present in the sandbox is the excrements of dogs and cats (but also of mice, rats and birds). The excrements of dogs and cats can contain worms. These can cause not only uncomfortable but also serious symptoms of diseases (for example flu-like symptoms, fever, belly complaints, tickling cough, but also lung and liver complaints).

Work method (see also “Outside play protocol”):

- check the sandbox before use
- cover the sandbox after every use
- make sure children wash their hands after playing in the sandbox

3.4 Other health risks caused by outside environment can be:

- a child gets a sunstroke
- a child dehydrates
- a child gets sunburned
- a child gets under cooled

Work method (see also “Outside play and UV protocol”):

- during extreme heat or cold weather the time of outside play should be restricted
- play as much as possible in shadowy spots with children
- children should get something to drink on a regular base
- put on sun crème at least 15-30 minutes before going outside during the summer period

There is also a health risk when children come in contact with pesticides/herbicides, are exposed to chemically contaminated dirt and are exposed to polluted open air. At that moment, the windows must be closed and the children have to stay inside.

The fire brigade or another expert shall give guidelines. These guidelines will be followed. Pesticides/herbicides are not used at The Clown Club.

4. Health risks caused by (the lack of) medical actions

Sometimes it is necessary to apply medical actions. Parents hand over the control of administering the medicine to the teachers. Medicine can only be administered in a proper way and only when the medical action is being acted out in a safe way (after filling out the medicine form by parent and teacher). The “Protocol medical handling” has to be followed by the teachers. Parents should have already given the medicine at home to be sure the child does not have an allergic reaction to it.

The following points are important when administering medicine:

- pay attention to the expiration date and how the medicine should be stored
- there has to be an instruction leaflet
- on the backside of the form filled out by the parents, the teachers have to write down who has administered the medicine, when the medicine was given and the amount that was given
- the teachers are not allowed to give aspirin ('paracetamol')

If there is any doubt about the medicine prescribed by the doctor, then the doctor has to be contacted. Personnel working at The Clown Club are not allowed to perform specific medical actions, such as giving injections; our staff is not qualified for this. Taking a child's temperature should only be done when it is necessary. After taking a temperature, the thermometer should be disinfected with 70% alcohol.

Using cream:

- applying creams must be done with a clean piece of paper; never put the same used surface in the pot to avoid contamination
- use gloves to rub cream; never put the same used surface in the pot to avoid contamination