

THE USE OF ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZERS IN OHIO CHILD CARE CENTERS

Summary

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be effective when used for hand hygiene. They may be safely and effectively used in child care to supplement required hand washing with soap and water when the following requirements are met.

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends hand washing to reduce infection transmission. Child care rules specify situations when the children and staff must use liquid soap and running water to wash their hands. Hand sanitizers may not be substituted for hand washing at these times. Staff may use hand sanitizers for themselves at any additional times which they feel are appropriate. Children may use hand sanitizers only if and when the parent/guardian completes the "Request for Administration of Medication" form (JFS 01217) and when staff are able to properly supervise and dispense the hand sanitizer. Keep in mind, hand sanitizer must be kept out of reach of children at all times.

Purpose

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers must be at least 60 percent alcohol to be effective; the use of other types of cleansers is not recommended. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective in removing nut allergens from surfaces. It is recommended that unscented products be used in the child care setting, as scented products may trigger asthma or allergy symptoms.

Requirements for Use: Rules 5101:2-12-15.1, 5101:2-13-15.1 and 5101:2-14-19 require hand washing in child care centers, type A and type B child care homes at the following times for *employees, child care staff members and providers*:

- Upon arrival at the program
- Before eating, serving, preparing food or bottles or feeding a child
- Before and after administering medication or first aid or completing a medical procedure or removing disposable gloves
- After toileting or assisting toileting
- After changing diapers or pull-ups
- After contact with bodily fluids or cleaning up spills or objects contaminated with bodily fluids
- After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects that have come in contact with a pet

Children must be instructed and assisted as needed to wash their hands:

- Before eating food
- After toileting
- After returning inside after outdoor play
- After contact with bodily fluids
- After handling pets, pet cages or other pet objects
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

The following recommendations are for best practice in the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers in Ohio child care centers.

1. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers should be located only in non child care areas where children are supervised by parents or child care staff members at all times. Hand sanitizer may not be accessible to children except at times when it is being used.
2. Do not allow children or staff to ingest alcohol-based hand sanitizers.
3. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are flammable-do not use while smoking or near open flame.
4. It is recommended when the child care program purchases alcohol-based hand sanitizers:
 - a. The program has a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for all alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the center
 - b. Refills for the alcohol-based hand sanitizers are stored with cleaning supplies away from heat sources or open flames and in accordance with Ohio Fire Code

regulations (OAC 1301:7-7-3405.5)

5. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers must be located so they do not drip liquid on the floor to create a fall hazard. A “drip catcher” may be placed on the dispenser to prevent this.

Instructions for Placement and Storage

The placement of the alcohol-based hand sanitizers, if wall mounted, must be in compliance with the Ohio Fire Code regulations (OAC 1301:7-7-3405.5) that require dispensers to:

- Have a maximum capacity of 68 ounces
- Be a minimum of 48 inches apart
- Be installed in locations that are not above, below or directly adjacent to electrical outlets, switches, appliances, devices or any other potential ignition source
- Be placed between 42 and 48 inches from the floor
- Be manually activated
- Be properly supplied with sprinkler systems if placed in carpeted areas

Ohio Fire Code regulations (OAC 1301:7-7-3405.5) requirements for alcohol-based hand sanitizers:

- There can be no aerosol containers in the hallway
- Dispensers can have a maximum capacity of 41 ounces
- There can be no more than 10 gallons in the hallway
- The hallway must be a minimum of 72 inches in width
- There can be no unapproved projections into the hallway

References:

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