



DURHAM REGION  
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# Wee Care

## Newsletter

Spring / Summer 2022



### Sun Safety



Child care providers play a significant role in teaching children about sun safe behaviours. It is important to teach and model sun safe behaviour to children at an early age as they are more likely to continue to put them into practice as they get older. Children can experience a sun burn in as little as 15 minutes of unprotected exposure to harmful UV rays. Ways you can protect yourself and children from the sun include:

- Check and be aware of the UV index
- Limit your time in the sun, especially during peak hours (11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
- Seek shade when you're outdoors for extended periods of time
- Wear clothing that covers the skin as well as eye protection
- Use sunscreen that is broad-spectrum (protects against UVA and UVB rays)



Protecting children from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation from the sun will reduce their risks of developing skin cancer later in life. Help children apply plenty of broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or more to all exposed areas of the skin such as their face, ears, neck, shoulders, back, knees, and the tops of their feet. Reapply sunscreen especially after swimming, excessive sweating, or toweling off. Sunscreen can only be used on children six months of age and older. For more sun safety information and resources for childcare facilities call Durham Health Connection Line at 1-800-841-2729 or visit [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/keep-children-cool-extreme-heat.html](https://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/keep-children-cool-extreme-heat.html).



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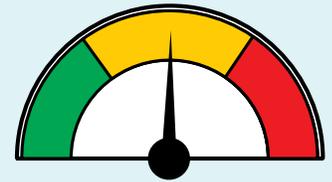
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# Extreme Weather Warning Information System

The Durham Region Health Department provides alerts for extreme heat events to our registered community partners (including childcare facilities) through our Heat Warning and Information System (HWIS). A heat warning occurs when the forecast conditions include a daytime high of at least 31°C and overnight temperatures of 20°C or greater, or Humidex values of at least 40°C for two consecutive days. Subscribers receive advanced notification of heat warnings throughout the summer months that can help in the preparation and mobilization of your heat response plan. If you haven't subscribed to early notifications of extreme heat events, you can register at [durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/extreme-heat-and-humidity.aspx](https://durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/extreme-heat-and-humidity.aspx).



**Heat  
Warning**

To protect children from heat-related illnesses, it is important to be aware of when the Region will experience extreme heat, what the signs of heat-related illnesses are, and ensuring your childcare centre has established the necessary protocols to reduce the risk of adverse effects related to heat. Visit the above-mentioned link to learn more about heat-related illnesses and for additional resources that will support your childcare centre in protecting children against heat-related health risks.

## Continued Best Practices

Thank you for your continued care and support of our smallest community members. We recognize the hard work that you do and wanted to share a few best practices to get you through the current wave of COVID-19. While these are not mandated, they will ensure that you are doing all that you can to keep you, your staff, visitors, and children as safe as possible.

- Wherever possible, staff should wear appropriate PPE while indoors.
- Increase cleaning and disinfection throughout the centre (see the [Cleaning and Disinfection Schedule](#) for guidance).
- Refrain from having parents in the centre during times of increased illness and absenteeism. If a parent or visitor attends the centre, promote the use of masking while indoors.
- Ensure that all staff, visitors, and children are using the screening tool every day (you can use [covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/)).
- Use onsite confirmation of screening during periods of increased illness and absenteeism.
- Promote outdoor play.
- Refrain from using sensory play indoors and plush items during periods of increased illness and absenteeism (see [IPAC Measures During Periods of Increased Illness](#)).
- Limit the movement of staff and children between rooms wherever possible.
- Ensure staff and children stay home when ill.
- Practice hand hygiene often and help young children do the same.

If you have questions about COVID-19, you can go to [COVID Info Hub](#) for more information. If you or someone you know has had an exposure to COVID-19, you can go to [this assessment](#) for direction on next steps.



# Is your centre experiencing an enteric outbreak?

Children attending child care centres are at a higher risk of acquiring an infectious disease when compared to children who stay at home. Not only are they exposed to more germs, but the risk of infection is increased by common interactions. While it is unrealistic to think that all infections can be prevented in child care centres, proper infection control practices will reduce the number of children getting sick, and frequency and severity of infection.

Child care centres must have an infection control program in place to help reduce the number of infections in the centre. An important component of an effective infection control program includes surveillance and monitoring, as well as communication with the Health Department.

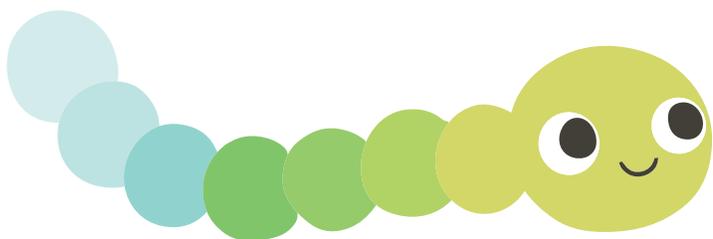
Child care staff should monitor the health of each child every day. Things to look for include changes in a child's behaviour or appearance, along with specific signs of enteric illness, such as vomiting and diarrhea.

To be considered a "true enteric case," a child or staff member should have two episodes of either vomiting or diarrhea (or combination thereof) within a 24 hour period.

Information regarding any child exhibiting signs and symptoms of enteric illness should be recorded immediately using the Health Department's [Child Care Routine Illness Surveillance Form](#). The purpose of recording children's symptoms of illness on this form is to make it easier to detect a potential outbreak.

If there are two or more children and/or staff in a room that meets the enteric case definition, it is likely that an outbreak is occurring. Outbreaks are considered "Reportable Diseases" and are required to be reported to the Health Department immediately. See the "Outbreak Notification" article to learn how to report an outbreak.

Should you have any other questions regarding outbreak management and reporting, please contact your area Public Health Inspector at 1-800-841-2729, and don't forget to reference your Wee Care Manual, which is full of useful information.



# Outbreak Notification



There is a **NEW** process for reporting outbreaks at your child care centre. In addition to completing the [Outbreak Notification Form](#), an online [Outbreak Line List Spreadsheet](#) **MUST** now also be completed and uploaded **with** the Notification Form. The spreadsheet and instructions on how to submit it can be found on our [website](#).

Once the Outbreak Notification Form is submitted online, you will receive a confirmation email that it was received and a Reference Number. A Public Health Inspector will contact you within 24 hours to follow up with your outbreak.

## Reminders:

- Complete all fields on the Outbreak Notification Form
- Complete all fields on the Outbreak Line List Spreadsheet (Name of Premise, Address, Phone number, Email, Date, New or Suspect Outbreak)
- There are 2 pages on the Excel Spreadsheet – one for children and one for staff
- You will not be able to submit the Outbreak Notification Form unless you attach your Outbreak Line List Spreadsheet



**Child Care Setting Outbreak Reporting Form**

Home / Health and Wellness / Public Health Inspections and Investigations / Operating a Child Care Centre

Required fields are marked with asterisks (\*)

**This form is to be used by child care centre operators/supervisors to notify Durham Region Health Department if an outbreak of illness (e.g. respiratory, enteric) is suspected or if you are unsure if an outbreak is occurring.**

Please ensure you complete the [child care centre outbreak line listing template](#). It is required to be uploaded prior to submitting this notification form.

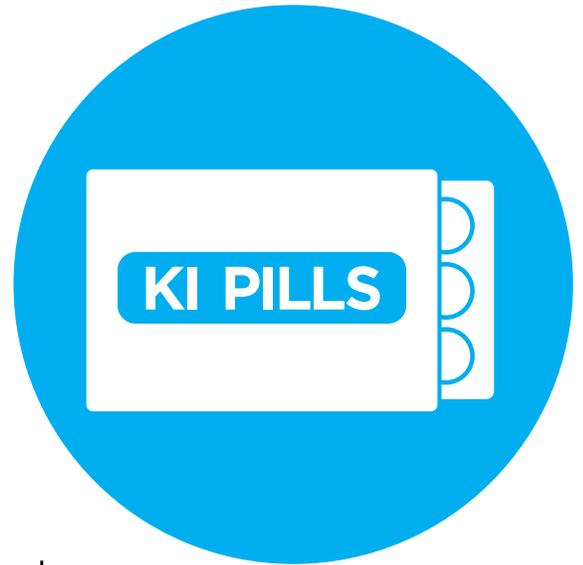
[Download our Child Care Centre Outbreak Line Listing template \(xlsx\)](#)

If you require assistance downloading the above template or completing this form [email us](#).

# KI

## Potassium Iodide (KI) Tablets

Durham Region is home to two nuclear generating stations, Pickering and Darlington. The current COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of planning in advance for all emergencies to ensure that we are prepared and able to successfully manage and respond to such events. As emergency preparedness is at the forefront of our minds, please use this time to check to ensure your child care centre(s) have a supply of KI tablets **if you are located within 10 kilometres** (Detailed Planning Zone) of either the Pickering or Darlington Nuclear Generating Stations.



Potassium iodide (KI) is a salt of stable iodine and is considered an early protective measure when taken at the right time and at the right dose. The function of KI tablets is to fill the thyroid gland with stable iodine to help prevent or reduce the absorption of radioactive iodine by the thyroid. KI tablet is one protective measure that can be used. Radioactive iodine has the potential to cause thyroid cancer later in life if absorbed by the thyroid gland.

In the highly unlikely event of a serious accident where there is a release of radioactive iodine to the environment, the decision to take KI tablets will come directly from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer to Health and will be communicated through media/internet, TV, radio outlets and other available channels.

Early 2019, KI tablets were re-distributed to all child care centres located within the 10 kilometre radius of both nuclear stations by Durham Region Health Department (DRHD). Only those child care centres located within a 10 kilometre radius of either nuclear stations are required to have a supply of KI tablets readily available on-site.

Now is a good time for all child care centres to take an inventory of their KI tablets and ensure the following are in place:

- Know where your KI tablets are stored and ensure they are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure there is an adequate supply of tablets readily available on-site for all children and staff. For dosage requirements please go to [KI Tablets Fact Sheet Q & A](#).
- Keep a record of the quantity of tablets, expiry date and the location(s) where the tablets are stored for each of your child care sites within the Detailed Planning Zone.
- Ensure there are written policies and procedures for: administering KI tablets to the children and staff, storage of tablets, record keeping, replacing of KI tablets, auditing, and that all staff are familiar with these written policies and procedures.
- Ensure KI information letters and consent forms are distributed yearly to every parent/ guardian who has a child or children at the centre and, signed consent forms are received and kept on file.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the children whose parents/guardians have NOT given consent to administer KI tablets in an emergency.

If your child care centre is located in the 10 kilometre radius of either nuclear station and you need more tablets or, you are a new site located in the 10 kilometre radius and did not receive a supply of KI tablets, please contact Senior Public Health Inspector Pamela Khan at [pamela.khan@durham.ca](mailto:pamela.khan@durham.ca).

For more information about KI, please contact our Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729, or visit [preparetobesafe.ca](http://preparetobesafe.ca).



# Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is an infection caused by the Coxsackie virus, commonly affecting young children.

## How does it spread?

It is spread by contact with saliva, mucus, or the stool of an infected person.

## What are the symptoms?

They include fever, poor appetite, lack of energy, headache, and sore throat often followed by painful sores in the mouth. A rash with blisters may also develop on the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, or on the buttocks.

## How long does it last?

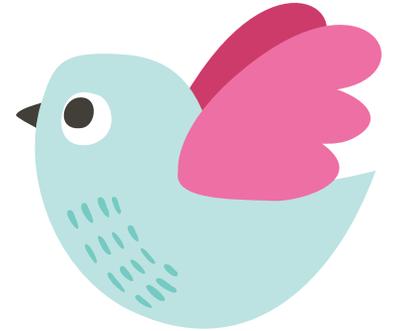
This illness usually lasts for 7–10 days. It may take up to 6 days after getting the virus before symptoms start to show. The virus can persist in stool for several weeks even after symptoms have gone away.

## Is there a treatment?

There is no specific treatment for hand, foot, and mouth disease. Over the counter medications can help with fever and pain and drinking fluids is important to prevent dehydration.

## What is the exclusion period?

There is no exclusion period: children may return once they feel well enough to participate in activities. Children with open sores should be excluded until the sores are no longer excreting fluids or secretions and are scabbed over. Download and print our [Facts About Hand, Foot & Mouth Disease](#) for more information.





## REMINDER! Update your contact information

From time-to-time, there may be an urgent message that Durham Region Health Department will have to send to all child care centres. A current contact list will help us distribute the information to you more efficiently. If your centre has had any changes to your child care centre contacts, such as managers, supervisors, telephone numbers, or e-mail addresses, please forward the new information to [veronica.memme@durham.ca](mailto:veronica.memme@durham.ca) to update the list.



**Please print and post this e-newsletter in a common area for those who do not have access to email.**

The WEE CARE Newsletter is published and distributed by Durham Region Health Department, Health Protection Division, and is distributed to licensed child care centers in Durham Region.

Questions, comments, and article submissions can be forwarded to Veronica Memme at [veronica.memme@durham.ca](mailto:veronica.memme@durham.ca).

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We would like to remind all child care centre owners, supervisors and staff that we welcome any suggestions that you may have for future article topics or ideas and any comments you have to improve the newsletter!

*We welcome your ideas and suggestions!*

Please submit comments by email to [veronica.memme@durham.ca](mailto:veronica.memme@durham.ca)

