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8.3 TOY CLEANING POLICY

Aim: To ensure that toys used in NHS Borders are able to withstand washing within the laundry department or must be of a material able to withstand hypochlorite solution. This can be achieved by reviewing what toys are in place and when toys need replacing, ensuring newly purchased or donated toys meet the above criteria

Toys can be a reservoir for pathogenic bacteria; however it is important to the children's development that they have access to toys. This policy is not to discourage the use of toys but to raise awareness that toys can be a potential or actual infection risk, particularly when toys are shared

Where toys are in place, it is important that the following good practice is encouraged to minimise the risk of infection.

Standards

Toys must be washed and dried according to a schedule. An assessment must be carried out within each clinical area, to determine the frequency required. The frequency must then be documented to enhance awareness amongst staff. However toys visibly contaminated with blood and/or other body fluids, or those that have come into contact with known or suspected infection must always be washed and dried before they can be reused. If decontamination is not possible, they must be discarded in clinical waste. The Infection Prevention Control Team is happy to advise where necessary.

Soft toys

These are discouraged due to the difficulty of laundering. They must be able to withstand a minimum of 72°C. (Seek advice from the Laundry Manager, BGH)

Hard toys

- thoroughly wash and dry hands
- don a disposable apron and gloves
- clean with 1,000ppm Chlorine solution, using a clean disposable cloth for each toy
- rinse thoroughly in warm water to remove detergent/disinfectant
- dry thoroughly using paper towels/roll
- dispose of cleaning cloth(s), disposable apron and gloves into clinical waste
- thoroughly wash and dry hands

Donated toys

The suitability of donated toys must be subject to an assessment by the individual clinical area. The Infection Prevention Control Team is available to assist with the infection risk element of the assessment. Potential donors should be encouraged to ask for advice on the choice of a suitable toy prior to purchase.

Please note: Some toys may be given for individual use, avoiding multi patient use.

Other points of note

For Health and Safety reasons, toys should always meet the appropriate European Standards and staff must observe the manufacturers recommendations. Toys with sharp and/or rough edges or those including small detachable components may pose particular problems to young children and should not be allowed within any ward or outpatient play area.

Inspect toys for damage or breakage and discard if unable to repair.

When there is an outbreak of infection, ensure toys are not shared. Any toys used by an affected child are for that child only and are decontaminated or discarded in clinical waste after use.

It may depend on the area that the toys are placed as to how they are managed; some areas pose more of an infection risk than others e.g. toys from an isolation room may require to be destroyed.

For further advice please liaise with the Infection Prevention Control Team

Ward 15 / Noah's Ark, Borders General Hospital, have their own toy policy which supersedes this one.

Other areas may also have their own toy policies but these policies must be approved by the IPCT.