



Biting is normal behavior for young children and is a common problem. Most bites are harmless and do not break the skin. If the skin is broken from the bite, infection can occur but it is rare.

Can a bite spread infections or diseases?

- Wounds from human bites, especially by young children, do not usually become infected with bacteria.
- Parents/guardians may be concerned about some of the more serious infections that are transmitted through blood and other body fluids such as Hepatitis B or C, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Infection may occur if a person is infected with any of these viruses AND if blood is exchanged as a result of the bite. This is very unlikely in child care settings. See the table below for more information.

Infection	How it spreads	What is the risk of spread?
Hepatitis B	From person to person through blood and body fluids. It can be passed through sexual intercourse, by sharing needles and syringes or from mother to baby at birth. The virus is not passed by contact with saliva if the skin is NOT broken.	If a child with Hepatitis B bites or is bitten by another child and the skin is broken by the bite, there is a risk of Hepatitis B infection.
Hepatitis C	From person to person through blood and body fluids containing blood.	Hepatitis C infection is rare in young children. Hepatitis C infection from a bite by a young child is extremely unlikely and has never been reported in child a care setting.
HIV	Passed through sexual intercourse, from mother to baby before or during delivery, or through blood when needles and syringes are shared.	The chance of transmitting HIV through the bite of a child, even when the skin is broken, is extremely unlikely and has never been reported in a child care setting. Giving a child medication to prevent HIV infection after a bite is not recommended.



How should I care for a wound if my child is bitten?

If the skin is NOT broken,

- Wash it with soap and water
- Apply a cold compress (cool damp cloth or ice pack) to help soothe the injury

If the skin is broken:

- Allow the wound to bleed, do not squeeze it
- Wash the wound with soap and water
- Contact your local Public Health Office or your doctor/nurse practitioner right away and advise them that your child was bitten by another child and that it broke the skin
- Watch the wound over the next few days. If it gets red or begins to swell, the child should be seen by a doctor/nurse practitioner.

If my child was the one who bit another child what should I do?

- Contact your local Public Health Office or your doctor/practitioner right away if the bite broke the skin. Advise them that your child bit another child.

How can I prevent my child from biting?

- Teach your child not to bite. Tell them that it hurts and can be dangerous to them and to the person they bite.
- Reinforce a “no biting” rule at all times
- Do not allow your child to bite in play, or pretend to bite your child.
- Show your child how to express anger and frustration with words like “No” or “I do not like that” instead of with biting. This will help them learn self-control.
- Re-direct or distract your child if you see a problem developing with a playmate

How can I keep my child safe?

- In Saskatchewan, Hepatitis B vaccine is given to all children in Grade 6.
- Have your child vaccinated early for Hepatitis B if a biting incident has occurred. When a child bites or is bitten in daycare or school, Hepatitis B vaccine is offered early to provide protection in case other biting incidents occur. If a child gets the vaccine earlier than grade 6 it will not need to be repeated.

Public Health will be notified by the child care facility of the bite incident and will complete an investigation. For additional information contact your local Public Health office.

Adapted from: http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/biting_in_child_care

Other references: [Government of Saskatchewan Infection Control Manual for Child Care Facilities](#)

