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“MOMS AGAINST COOTIES” CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO KEEP CHILDREN HEALTHIER BY PROMOTING DAYCARE DISINFECTION

New research suggests greater attention to daycare disinfection results in less childhood illness and lower antibiotic use.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 13, 2010) – Aiming to educate mothers and daycare workers nationwide about the importance of proper daycare disinfection in keeping children healthy, the Water Quality and Health Council launched a national “Moms Against Cooties” campaign.

Utilizing [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), and [FourSquare](#), the campaign will provide tips for properly disinfecting daycares while highlighting some of the risks of improper disinfection.

Studies suggest daycare facilities are an ideal place for germs and viruses to spread. Microorganisms can survive for several days on many inanimate objects, but playground equipment and environmental surfaces inside daycare centers were found to be the most frequently contaminated, according to a [study](#) by the University of Arizona.

A new [study](#) that will be published by the University of Arizona found that proper disinfection can reduce the need for antibiotics among children in daycare centers by 32 percent. Cleaning and disinfecting daycare facilities can help lower a child’s need for antibiotics. [Research](#) also suggests bacteria do not become more resistant to antibiotics when thorough disinfection is practiced.

“A daycare center and harmful viruses can be best friends,” said lead researcher Professor Charles P. Gerba. “But, this doesn’t have to be the case. Wiping down toys and diaper-changing areas with disinfectants is a cheap and easy way to kill germs – and wipe out what could become a small outbreak.”

“People don’t realize that children up to two years old put their hands or other objects in their mouths an average of 81 times per hour,” said Dr. Gerba, “At that rate, your child’s chances of catching the flu or another illness increases substantially. That’s why it’s important to try and reduce the spread of germs by disinfecting daycare surfaces and toys.”

Sick children can exact an economic toll on both parents and their employers. According to the [National Association for Sick Child Daycare](#), working mothers are absent from their jobs from five to 29 days each year caring for ill children, costing employers between \$2 billion and \$12 billion annually in lost productivity. Those parents who feel they cannot take time off from their jobs to care for their sick children may deliver, not just a child to daycare, but little “illness incubators.”

The “Moms Against Cooties” campaign promotes guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and many states that recommend chlorine bleach solutions for disinfecting common daycare environmental surfaces.

“Disinfection is needed to control the notorious norovirus, well known for shutting down schools, restaurants, hotels, cruise ships and even restricting visitors from seeing their loved ones in nursing homes,” said Michigan State University microbiologist Dr. Joan Rose, a member of the WQ&HC. “Using a disinfectant, like chlorine bleach, can go a long way toward keeping children and their families a lot healthier. It’s more affordable and easier to disinfect daycares appropriately than spend time and money on doctors and antibiotics. ”

The Council is offering free downloadable posters and tips on how to properly disinfect daycare centers. The posters can be downloaded online at www.disinfect-for-health.org.

To learn more, visit www.MomsAgainstCooties.com,

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