



Come Grow with Us

Health education and resource information for child care providers



What is Your Fish IQ?

Fish is an excellent source of protein, healthy fats, and other nutrients that are important to a healthy diet. Many fish types are also an excellent source of Omega-3 fatty acids. One type of Omega-3 fat, called Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is especially important to the development of the brain and eyes of fetuses, infants and children. Research also indicates that it can help improve language skills and coordination in infants and children.

It is especially important that infants and children and women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or may become pregnant eat a variety of fish to get DHA.

York Region offers the following suggestions to help you provide healthy fish choices at your centre:

- Each week, children should be offered two servings of fish that are low in mercury and high Omega-3 fats. Examples include: anchovies, herring, rainbow trout, mackerel (Atlantic or Pacific), salmon, sardines, Arctic Char and smelt.
- If you offer canned tuna at your centre, offer “light” canned tuna more often than “white” or albacore” tuna. Light tuna contains less mercury
- Offer fresh, frozen or canned fish more often than breaded and deep fried fish sticks. The later type contains unhealthy unsaturated fat

York Region Community and Health Services has developed a guide to help caregivers and parents make healthy and safe fish choices for themselves and the young children in their care. The *Guide to Eating Fish for Women, Children and Families* provides advice on what types and how much fish to eat. To learn more or get a copy of the guide, please visit www.york.ca/fishguide or call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.





Visiting animals in public settings

Visiting animals in a public setting such as a petting zoo or farm can be a fun and educational experience. However, diseases can be spread from animals to people if some simple precautions are not followed.



To ensure an enjoyable and safer trip for everyone, please review the following information with children, adult supervisors and staff prior to visiting the local petting zoo or farm.

There have been recent outbreaks of illness in Canada associated with visits to a petting zoo at a farm or fair. Animals can carry disease without showing any signs of illness and can “shed” disease into their environment.

Animals carry germs in their intestines and can pass these germs to people through their feces. The most common way to pass disease from animals to humans is by the fecal-oral route. Animal fur, hair, skin, and/or saliva that is contaminated with infectious fecal matter can be transferred to people when they touch, pet, feed, or are licked by an animal.

Hand Hygiene is the key to prevention

Inadequate cleaning of hands is one of the main causes of disease outbreaks associated with animals in public settings.

Before your trip, review the current hand hygiene procedures with children, parent supervisors and staff. Refer to Appendix 2 *Correct Handwashing Procedure* and *How to Correctly Use Hand Sanitizer* in your *Come Grow with Us Manual*.

Also, in advance of your visit, determine whether the facility has:

- Hand hygiene facilities (i.e. hand washing facilities or alcohol based hand sanitizers) located at every exit from animal areas
- Washroom facilities equipped with running water, liquid soap, and paper towels
- Adequate staff supervising the area where animal contact is permitted
- An eating area that is separate from the animal area

During your visit, it is especially important to practice hand hygiene:

- After touching or feeding an animal
- Immediately upon leaving animal areas
- After touching an animal’s environment (e.g., barriers, pens, etc.)
- Before eating and drinking
- After cleaning or removing boots and shoes worn during the visit
- After using the toilet

Other helpful tips include:

- Discourage hand-to-mouth activities while in animal areas (e.g., thumb-sucking, use of pacifiers and bottles, eating, drinking)
- Ensure that there are an appropriate number of adult supervisors to keep a close eye on the children
- Do not use baby wipes in place of handwashing. They do not kill dangerous germs like *E.coli*.

A bite, scratch or injury caused by an animal in a public or private setting should be attended to and reported to York Region Community and Health Services immediately. If a member of your group experiences diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, bloating or gas up to three weeks following a visit to animals in a public setting, seek medical attention.



For more information, please call
Health Connection at