



factsheet

There have been a small number of studies that made a link between cross infection and Soft toys in GP's waiting rooms, conversely similar studies recommended creating a Child Friendly Environment with easy to disinfect Hard Toys.

A 2002 paper that appeared in the British Journal of General Practice (1) found that:

1. There were no hard toys with heavy contamination by coliforms or other bacteria.
2. Soft toys were far more contaminated
 - a. 20% of toys showing moderate to heavy coliform contamination
 - b. 90% showing moderate to heavy bacterial contamination
3. Many waiting-room toys are not cleaned routinely
4. Hard toys can be cleaned and disinfected easily
5. Soft toys in general practitioners' waiting rooms pose an infectious risk

A similar 2000 paper (2) found that :

1. General practitioners--and other healthcare professionals are encouraged to make their premises child friendly.
2. Toys are often provided
3. The toys appeared generally unclean
4. Bacteria were cultured more frequently from soft toys
5. There does exist an appreciable (1 in 10) risk of cross-infection
6. Toys with a hard surface are preferred as these are less likely to be contaminated and are more easily disinfected.

1. Merriman E et al. Toys are a potential source of cross-infection in general practitioners' waiting rooms. *British Journal of General Practice*. 2002; 52(475): 138-40.
2. McKay I Gillespie TA. Bacterial contamination of children's toys used in general practitioners' surgery. *Scottish Medical Journal*. 2000; 45(1): 12-3.
3. Rogers M et al. Rotavirus outbreak on a paediatric oncology floor: possible association with toys. *American Journal of Infection Control*. 2000; 28(5):378-80.
4. Davies MW et al. Bacterial colonisation of toys in neonatal intensive care cots. *Paediatrics*. 2000; 106(2):E18.
5. BATTERY JP et al. Multiresistant pseudomonas aeruginosa outbreak in a pediatric oncology ward related to bath toys. *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*. 1998; 17(6): 509-13.
6. Krilov LR et al. Impact of an infection control program in a specialised pre-school. *American Journal of Infection Control*. 1996; 24(3-): 167-73.