

Protocol

Human Bites and Scratches

Human bites are very common among young children, but usually do not cause serious injury. If the skin is broken, there is always a risk of introducing bacteria into the wound. Saliva without visible blood poses no real health risk for the transmission of HIV or Hepatitis C, and Hepatitis B poses a very rare risk.

Children or adults who are the victims of a biting incident may transmit blood products to the biter if the skin is broken. In this incidence, the victim of a biting would be considered the “source” in a body fluid exchange. If a child bites another child, and they both have their completed Hepatitis B vaccine series, blood testing is not required. The risk of HIV is negligible, and Hepatitis C incidence in children is very low. Both children should be referred to their healthcare provider for any further recommendations. If a child bites an adult, and the adult is a UCPS employee, refer them to Occ Med, and refer the child to their health care provider for any further recommendations.

Scratches that draw blood are not considered an exchange of body fluids unless the child that did the scratching had open wounds or blood under his nails, or unless mucous membranes were exposed to the blood.

If clothing covers a bite/scratch where the skin is broken, an exposure of body fluids should not be considered.

Protocol:

The school nurse should be informed if there is a biting/scratching incident at school in which the skin is broken. The biter/scratcher and the victim of these incidents will be referred to their health care providers on a case by case basis dependent on the guidelines listed above and below.

Management Guidelines for Treating Human Bites/Scratches:

1. If skin is broken in the case of biting/scratching, the wound should be cleansed as soon as possible with soap and water. Apply ice if swelling occurs.
2. For bites, if the person who was bitten is a staff member, they should be referred to Occ Med for an evaluation. If the person who did the biting is a child, and they have a completed Hepatitis B vaccine series, baseline blood tests are not required, but they should be referred to their health care provider for any further recommendations.
3. Scratches do not constitute an exchange of body fluids unless the scratcher has open wounds or bleeding from the fingers or hands. If a staff member who was scratched prefers to have blood drawn as a precaution, they will be referred to OccMed for testing.

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Date



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