



Bloodborne pathogens and Standard Precautions In-service



Why is it important to protect yourself from contact with blood and body fluids?

Although they can't be seen, there are hundreds of tiny organisms living in blood and other body fluids that can cause disease in humans. They are called "bloodborne pathogens."

Some of these organisms are harmless and can be handled easily by the body's immune system, but others can cause severe illness, such as hepatitis or AIDS.

Bloodborne pathogens include:

- **HIV** (can cause AIDS)
- **Hepatitis B**
- **Hepatitis C**
 - Needlestick is the most common cause of work-related infection.
 - **There is NO vaccine against HIV.**
 - Can cause autoimmune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)
 - Hepatitis B vaccine prevents this disease. Persons who have received the vaccine and developed immunity are at virtually no risk for infection.
A series of three (3) injections are required, given initially, then 1–2 months later, then 4–6 months after the first injection.
 - For the unvaccinated person the risk from a single needlestick or cut exposure ranges from 6%–30%.
 - Needlestick is the most common cause of work-related infection.
 - There is no vaccine against hepatitis C and no treatment after an exposure that will prevent infection.

These pathogens are transmitted through contact with infected body fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal secretions.

Exposures occurs if:

- the skin is punctured by a contaminated needle, razor, or other sharp item
- when broken skin or mucous membranes are splashed with blood or body fluid.

Fortunately, most exposures do not result in infections.

99.7% of needlestick/cut exposures
do not result in infection.

Standard Precautions are designed to prevent transmission of blood borne pathogens. Standard Precautions must be observed in all situations where there is *potential* for contact with blood or other potentially infectious body fluids.

***POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS BODY FLUIDS:**

- Blood
- Semen
- Vaginal secretions
- Saliva
- Cerebrospinal fluid
- Synovial fluid
- Pleural fluid
- Peritoneal fluid
- Pericardial fluid
- Amniotic fluid
- Feces
- Nasal secretions (snot)
- Sputum
- Sweat
- Tears
- Urine
- Vomit

Treat all human blood and body fluids as if they are infectious.

Remember who you are protecting—**YOURSELF!**

Standard Precaution #1: Handwashing

Handwashing is the single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection.

Thorough handwashing removes pathogens from the skin.

Wash hands before and after all client or body fluid contact. Immediately wash hands and other skin surfaces that are contaminated with blood or body fluids. When wearing gloves, wash hands as soon as the gloves are removed.

*Hand sanitizers are recommended **only** when you can't wash your hands, but DOES NOT replace proper handwashing.*

Proper handwashing procedure



Standard Precaution #2: Gloves

- Use gloves in all situations where you may come in contact with blood or body fluids.
- Use gloves for client care involving contact with mucous membranes, such as brushing teeth.
- Change gloves and wash hands between client contacts.
- Use gloves when you have scrapes, scratches, or chapped skin.
- Do not wash or disinfect disposable gloves for reuse.



Standard Precaution #3: Protective barriers

Protective barriers, including gloves, reduce the risk of your skin and body of being exposed to potentially infective blood and body fluids. You should wear the appropriate barriers for the work you are doing.

Employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE).

Protective equipment includes (but is not limited to):

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gloves• Gowns• Masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foot Coverings• Resuscitation Devices
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Standard Precaution #4: Proper disposal of sharp items

A “sharp” is any object that can penetrate the skin, such as needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, and exposed ends of wires. A sharp is contaminated if it has been in contact with blood, body fluids, or body tissues.

Contaminated sharps must be disposed of properly. A puncture-proof container can be used in the home to dispose of sharps. Examples include: old laundry detergent jugs or a coffee can.

For clients who give themselves injections: **DO NOT RECAP THEIR NEEDLE.** If your client is unable to put the needle in their proper disposal container, take the container to them.



Additional Precautions for infection control

If you know or suspect that a client has a disease that is spread in one of the following ways, use these extra precautions, **in addition to Standard Precautions:**

Airborne germs can travel long distances through the air and are breathed in by people. Examples of diseases caused by airborne germs: TB, chickenpox, shingles.

Contact germs can cause the spread of disease by touch. Examples of diseases caused by contact germs: pink-eye, scabies, wound infections, MRSA.

Droplet germs can travel short distances through the air, usually not more than three feet. Sneezing, coughing, and talking can spread these germs. Examples of diseases caused by droplet germs: flu, pneumonia.

IF AN EXPOSURE OCCURS

Immediately following an exposure to blood or body fluids (*depending on the area of the body exposed*):

- Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water.
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water.
- Irrigate (rinse) eyes with clean water or saline.

NEXT,

- Call the office immediately and ask to speak with the SFC Director
- Remember that mandatory testing of a client is not legal.

Tips:

- Treat all linen soiled with blood or body secretions as potentially infectious.
- Surfaces that have been contaminated with blood or body fluids should be cleaned with a disinfectant of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water.
- When in doubt, wear gloves AND wash hands often.