

Preventing the Spread of Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne pathogens, such as bacteria and viruses, are present in blood and body fluids and can cause disease in humans. The bloodborne pathogens of primary concern are hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. These and other bloodborne pathogens are spread primarily through:

- **Direct contact.** Infected blood or body fluid from one person enters another person's body at a correct entry site, such as infected blood splashing in the eye.
- **Indirect contact.** A person's skin touches an object that contains the blood or body fluid of an infected person, such as picking up soiled dressings contaminated with an infected person's blood or body fluid.

Follow standard precautions to help prevent the spread of bloodborne pathogens and other diseases whenever there is a risk of exposure to blood or other body fluids. These precautions require that all blood and other body fluids be treated as if they are infectious. Standard precautions include maintaining personal hygiene and using personal protective equipment (PPE), engineering controls, work practice controls, and proper equipment cleaning and spill cleanup procedures.

TO PREVENT INFECTION, FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

- Avoid contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Use CPR breathing barriers, such as resuscitation masks, when giving ventilations (rescue breaths).
- Wear disposable gloves whenever providing care, particularly if you may come into contact with blood or body fluids. Also wear protective coverings, such as a mask, eyewear and a gown, if blood or other body fluids can splash.
- Cover any cuts, scrapes or sores and remove jewelry, including rings, before wearing disposable gloves.
- Change gloves before providing care to a different victim.
- Remove disposable gloves without contacting the soiled part of the gloves and dispose of them in a proper container.
- Thoroughly wash your hands and other areas immediately after providing care. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer where hand-washing facilities are not available if your hands are not visibly soiled. When practical, wash your hands before providing care.

TO REDUCE THE RISK OF EXPOSURE, FOLLOW THESE ENGINEERING AND WORK PRACTICE CONTROLS:

- Use biohazard bags to dispose of contaminated materials, such as used gloves and bandages. Place all soiled clothing in marked plastic bags for disposal or cleaning. Biohazard warning labels are required on any container holding contaminated materials.
- Use sharps disposal containers to place sharps items, such as needles.
- Clean and disinfect all equipment and work surfaces soiled by blood or body fluids.
 - Use a fresh disinfectant solution of approximately 1½ cups of liquid chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water (1 part bleach per 9 parts water, or about a 10% solution) and allow it to stand for at least 10 minutes.
 - Scrub soiled boots, leather shoes and other leather goods, such as belts, with soap, a brush and hot water. If worn, wash and dry uniforms according to the manufacturer's instructions.

IF YOU ARE EXPOSED, TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS IMMEDIATELY:

- Wash needlestick injuries, cuts and exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water.
- If splashed with blood or potentially infectious material around the mouth or nose, flush the area with water.
- If splashed in or around the eyes, irrigate with clean water, saline or sterile irrigants for 20 minutes.
- Report the incident to the appropriate person identified in your employer's exposure control plan immediately. Additionally, report the incident to emergency medical services (EMS) personnel who take over care.
- Record the incident by writing down what happened. Include the date, time and circumstances of the exposure; any actions taken after the exposure; and any other information required by your employer.
- Seek immediate follow-up care as identified in your employer's exposure control plan.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require employers to have an exposure control plan, a written program outlining the protective measures the employer will take to eliminate or minimize employee exposure incidents. The exposure control plan guidelines should be made available to employees and should specifically explain what they need to do to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Additionally, OSHA requires that a hepatitis B vaccination series be made available to all employees who have occupational exposure within 10 working days of initial assignment, after appropriate training has been completed. However, employees may decide not to have the vaccination. The employer must make the vaccination available if an employee later decides to accept the vaccination.

Check out OSHA's website (www.osha.gov) or refer to your employer's exposure control officer for more information on OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR part 1910.1030).

Removing Disposable Gloves

Note: To remove gloves without spreading germs, never touch your bare skin with the outside of either glove.

1 PINCH GLOVE

Pinch the palm side of one glove near your wrist. Carefully pull the glove off so that it is inside out.



2 SLIP TWO FINGERS UNDER GLOVE

Hold the glove in the palm of your gloved hand. Slip two fingers under the glove at the wrist of the remaining gloved hand.



3 PULL GLOVE OFF

Pull the glove until it comes off, inside out. The first glove should end up inside the glove you just removed.



4 DISPOSE OF GLOVES AND WASH HANDS

After removing the gloves:

- Dispose of gloves and other personal protective equipment (PPE) in a proper biohazard container.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and running water, if available. Otherwise, rub hands thoroughly with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly soiled.