



## Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne pathogens are viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms that are carried in a person's bloodstream and cause disease. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). If a person comes in contact with bloodborne pathogen-infected blood, he or she may become infected as well. Some bloodborne pathogens are deadly, so it is important to be aware of universal safety precautions.

### These bodily fluids may spread bloodborne pathogens:

- Blood products (such as plasma)
- Semen or vaginal secretions
- Fluids surrounding the brain, spine, heart and joints
- Fluids in the chest and abdomen
- Other fluids containing visible blood (such as saliva in dental procedures)

### Protecting Against Infection

Many workers must follow universal precautions by law. Universal precautions means treating everyone's blood and other bodily fluids as infectious at all times. The two areas of concern when protecting against exposure to bloodborne pathogens are personal protective equipment and good housekeeping.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Gloves will provide a barrier between you and any contaminated substances. Ensure gloves are in good condition, free of holes and tears. Never reuse disposable latex, nylon or hypoallergenic gloves.

- A mask and eye protection or a full face shield will prevent fluids from splashing into eyes, nose or mouth.
- An apron will prevent spills from penetrating clothing.
- Always wash hands after removing gloves and PPE.

## Proper Housekeeping

- Don't touch broken glass. Pick it up with a broom and dustpan. Always dispose of contaminated glass in a puncture-resistant, leakproof container with the biohazard symbol.
- Never reach into trash to retrieve an object. Empty the contents onto a newspaper and search with your eyes.
- Wipe up spilled blood or other body fluids with disposable towels soaked in a disinfectant. Be sure to wear utility gloves.
- Replace protective coverings on work surfaces if visibly contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids.
- Place all contaminated waste in a leak-proof container or a red bag labeled with the biohazard symbol.

## If You're Exposed, Don't Panic Wash the exposed area immediately with soap and running water.

- Report the accident promptly to your supervisor.
- Get medical attention, if necessary.
- Ask about the hepatitis B immune globulin if you have not had the vaccine for hepatitis B. It can provide short-term protection.
- Ask about the use of antiviral drugs for protection against HIV after an occupational exposure.



Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

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