



Blood Dangers

Bloodborne pathogens are viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms carried in a person's bloodstream and by other bodily fluids. They can cause disease. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). If a person is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen, he or she may become infected. Some bloodborne pathogens are deadly, so know the precautions to stay safe.

Transmission

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

Protection

Many workers follow universal precautions by law. Universal precautions means treating everyone's blood and other bodily fluids as infectious at all times. The 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.
- An apron will prevent spills from penetrating your clothing.
- A mask and eye protection or a full face shield will prevent fluids from splashing into your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Always wash your hands after removing gloves and other PPE.

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.
- Ask about the use of anti-viral drugs for protection against HIV after an occupational exposure.

Learn all you can about universal precautions and bloodborne pathogens. The more informed you are, the better prepared you'll be in case of an emergency. Read your employer's exposure control plan, and if you have questions, ask your supervisor or medical director.

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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