

**WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENTAL EXPOSURE
TO BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS**

1. **FIRST AID** (Administer the following treatment at nearest facility)

- Needlestick - allow to bleed
- do not squeeze
- wash with soap and water
- apply alcohol

Mucous Membrane/eye - rinse well with water or normal saline

Skin - wash well with soap and water

2. **Contact family physician**, physician in emergency or a Public Health Nurse immediately. Depending on the type of exposure, treatment options need to be discussed and initiated with (two) 2 hours of exposure.
3. **Identify the source if possible**. If you know the source of the possible infection tell the physician or Public Health Nurse.
4. **Baseline blood work to be done includes:** HIV, Hepatitis B and C and syphilis screening. If known, the source should also be tested.
5. **Depending on the results of the blood work, further treatment may be required within 7 days of exposure.**
6. **It is recommended that in:**
- 6 weeks – HIV testing is repeated
 - 12 weeks – HIV testing and syphilis is repeated
 - 24 weeks – HIV, hepatitis B and C testing is repeated
 - 1 year – HIV testing is repeated, if antiretroviral drugs are taken

STANDARD PRECAUTION REGARDING BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS

What are “Standard Precautions”?

“Standard precautions” are steps we should take to protect ourselves when we come into contact with the blood or body fluids of other people. Standard precautions are intended to control the spread of infectious bacteria/viruses.

Most of the time you can not tell if a person is infected with AIDS, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or any number of other diseases. The best thing to do is treat all blood and body fluids as POTENTIALLY infectious. Potentially infectious body fluids include blood, semen and vaginal secretions.

The Basics of “Standard Precautions”:

Blood and body fluids – ALWAYS treat as potentially infectious. Clean up spills promptly using absorbent material first, and then clean more thoroughly with a disinfectant like household bleach.

Gloves – wear latex, vinyl or rubber disposable gloves when handling blood, body fluids or when cleaning cuts, scrapes or wounds. Wash hands after removing gloves and dispose of the gloves in a plastic bag. Add gloves to your first aid kit so they are always ready.

Hand washing is the best single way to prevent the spread of germs from infectious bacteria/viruses. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds.

Always wash hands:

- before preparing food
- before mealtimes
- before breastfeeding and
- after toileting or diapering
- before and after providing first aid
- after handling blood or body fluids

How can you help keep yourself safe?

Blood splashed on your skin may cause infection by getting into cuts, nicks or raw chapped areas. Protect yourself by wearing gloves if you are going to be exposed to blood or body fluids. For example, if you help someone who has a bleeding nose you should wear vinyl or latex disposable gloves to protect your skin. If this is not possible, continue to help the person and then wash immediately afterwards.

Gloves are not necessarily required if you come into contact with urine, feces, nasal secretions, saliva or vomit, UNLESS you can see blood in it. However, in most situations gloves are recommended. **Remember, it is always important to wash you hands carefully after touching any body fluids even if you have worn gloves.**

How can you safely clean up spills of blood or other body fluids?

1. Protect yourself by wearing disposable vinyl or latex or rubber gloves. If there is a risk of splashing, use protective eye wear.
2. Use disposable absorbent material such as paper towels to remove most of the spill.
3. Wipe the floor or any contaminated surfaces with a disinfectant solution. This can easily be made by mixing one part household bleach to ten parts of water. This type of bleach solution should be freshly made up or it may lose its strength. For carpets or upholstery that may be damaged by bleach, other household germicides or disinfectant agents can be used. Soak mops or brushes that have been used for cleaning in a disinfectant for 20 minutes.
4. When you are finished, place used absorbent material and disposable gloves in a plastic bag. Seal bag and deposit in garbage. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. Be careful of cross contamination i.e. if you touch the bag with gloves it is now contaminated.

What should you do if you find a used syringe or condom?

A needle that someone else has used contains a small amount of their blood, which may carry the AIDS or Hepatitis B or C virus. Used condoms can also contain infectious body fluids. While the risk of infection from used condoms and syringes is very low, the following procedure will help reduce the risk:

1. If you find a used syringe or condom, it is important to dispose of them promptly and carefully.
2. Use a pair of tongs or pliers, or a pair of sturdy gloves to pick up these items. **Do not bend, break or recap needles.**
3. Discard condoms in a plastic bag.
4. Discard syringes or needles in a puncture-proof container, preferably one intended for such purposes. Any plastic or metal container with a lid, such as a coffee can, will also do.
5. When you have finished wash your hands with soap and water.
6. Record the location of where the needles were found and inform your supervisor and the OH&S Coordinator.
7. Full puncture resistant containers are to be turned into Stores.

ENSURE FIRST AID TREATMENT RECORD IS COMPLETED

1. Report details of exposure to supervisor immediately. For a needlestick injury, if possible, place needle in puncture proof container for disposal.
2. **Report to Public Health Unit at . . .** They will access the risk level of your exposure, as treatment options need to be discussed and initiated within two (2) hours of exposure.
3. Employee to complete WCB Form 6A, Supervisor to complete RDN Accident/Incident Investigation Report, WCB Form 7.

4. Follow-up with own physician regarding continued antiretroviral therapy and/or Public Health Unit staff for serology tests and counseling.