

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious, disease-causing microorganisms in blood and bodily fluids.

Workers in many occupations, including first responders, housekeeping personnel, nurses, and healthcare workers are at high risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens. However, any person that is administering first aid has the opportunity to be exposed to bloodborne pathogens. All workers should see/read/hear this topic so they can act in the safest way to minimize exposure if they have to administer first aid to a co-worker while on the job.

The three most common bloodborne pathogens are:

- Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)
- Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

A written exposure control plan must be part of the workplace safety and health program for any organization that has employees that could potentially be exposed to bloodborne pathogens. Employees must complete exposure control training before they begin work.

OSHA Standard 1910.1030(c)(1)(i) *Each employer having an employee(s) with occupational exposure [to blood or other potentially infectious materials] shall establish a written Exposure Control Plan designed to eliminate or minimize employee exposure.*

Follow the recommendations in this topic to ensure you are taking all precautions when it comes to contact with potential bloodborne pathogens in the workplace.



Universal Precautions

When it comes to blood and bodily fluids, the best approach is to adopt the Universal Precautions to infection control. The concept of Universal Precautions means that you should treat all blood and certain body fluids as if they were known to be infectious with bloodborne pathogens.

OSHA Standard 1910.1030(d)(1) *Universal precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. Under circumstances in which differentiation between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids shall be considered potentially infectious materials.*

Bloodborne pathogens can be transmitted by ingestion, through blood and certain bodily fluids.

In the workplace, bloodborne pathogens may be transmitted from an infected person via needle-sticks, human bites, cuts, abrasions, or through mucous membranes (eyes and nose).

Direct Contact Exposure

Infected blood or body fluid from one person enters another person's body directly. Example: infected blood splashes into the eye or into an open abrasion on the skin.

Indirect Contact Exposure

Infected blood or body fluid infects another person by way of another object. Examples: A used needle pricks another person's finger or a person who isn't wearing gloves picks up soiled gauze and has a cut on their hand which is an entry point for infection.



To prevent potential infection from bloodborne pathogens, follow these guidelines as they are applicable to your situation and workplace.

- Avoid direct or indirect contact with anyone else's blood and body fluids.
- Always wear disposable gloves when providing first aid care.
- Use additional personal protective equipment (PPE) like eye protection, shoe coverings, gowns and breathing barriers if required by your workplace exposure control plan and/or the situation calls for additional layers of protection to protect you from bloodborne pathogens.
- Dispose of sharps in designated sharps containers immediately after use. Sharps are usually used needles but could include any contaminated broken glass, razors, or utility knives.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth during or after providing first aid care.
- Remove disposable gloves without contacting the soiled part of the gloves and dispose of them immediately in a proper container.
- Thoroughly wash your hands (and any other areas) immediately after providing care.



- All equipment, tools, PPE, working surfaces and floors must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated after exposure to blood or bodily fluids.



Certain bloodborne pathogens can still be infectious for days outside the body. Hepatitis B can live in dried blood for up to a week and Hepatitis C can survive for up to four days.



DON'T SKIP THIS STEP!

OSHA Standard 1910.1030(d)(4)(ii) *All equipment and environmental and working surfaces shall be cleaned and decontaminated after contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.*

- If you think you may have been exposed to bloodborne pathogens, take the following actions immediately:
 - Wash any injuries, cuts and exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water. Flush around the mouth and nose with water.
 - If any blood or body fluids was splashed in or around the eyes, irrigate with clean water or saline for 20 minutes.
 - Report the incident to the appropriate person within your company and record the what happened by filing an incident report.
 - Seek immediate follow-up care.
 - Take any additional steps outlined in your employer's exposure control plan.



(*7)

REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT TIPS WHEN IT COMES TO POTENTIAL BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS IN THE WORKPLACE:

- Any person that is administering first aid has the opportunity to be exposed to bloodborne pathogens.
- Treat all blood and certain body fluids as if they were known to be infectious with bloodborne pathogens.
- Avoid direct or indirect contact with anyone else's blood and body fluids.
- Always wear disposable gloves when providing first aid care.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth during or after providing first aid care.
- Dispose of sharps in designated sharps containers immediately after use. Sharps are usually used needles but could include any contaminated broken glass, razors, or utility knives.
- Remove disposable gloves without contacting the soiled part of the gloves and dispose of them immediately in a proper container.
- Thoroughly wash your hands (and any other areas) immediately after providing care.
- All equipment, tools, PPE, working surfaces and floors must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated after exposure to blood or bodily fluids.
- If you think you may have been exposed to bloodborne pathogens, seek immediate follow-up care.



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