

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

The information provided in this safety topic is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice or formal first aid training.

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.*

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.

- Always wear disposable gloves when providing first aid care.
- 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 immediately after providing care.
- All working surfaces and floors must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated after exposure to blood or bodily fluids.

Discussion

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What is the benefit of adopting the concept of Universal Precautions while at work?

Where should you dispose of gloves or other materials that may have blood on them?