

IPC Topic: Bloodborne Pathogens Part 2

Intro: Bloodborne pathogens are germs in an infected person's blood that can cause disease. There are infection control actions you can take to reduce the risk of exposure to germs that spread from the blood reservoir.

What is the Risk? Germs such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV can live in the blood and cause diseases.¹ Health care workers are at risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens because of their contact with patients' blood or other bodily fluids.

- ❑ Infection control actions to minimize risk:
 - To prevent spread of bloodborne pathogens in the workplace, health care workers must assume that blood and other body fluids from all patients are potentially infectious.
 - Observe Standard Precautions - basic practices that apply to all patient care, regardless of whether the patient is suspected or a known positive to bloodborne pathogens and apply to all healthcare settings.²
 - Standard Precautions are also intended to protect patients by ensuring that healthcare personnel do not carry infectious organisms to patients on their hands or via equipment used during patient care.

- ❑ Standard precautions include²:
 - Hand hygiene - with soap and water after contact with blood or body fluids.
 - Environmental cleaning and disinfection- disinfect noncritical surfaces with an EPA-registered disinfectant according to the label's safety precautions and instructions.
 - Injection and medication safety
 - Risk assessment with use of appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, face masks) when anticipating contact with blood or body fluids.
 - Properly cleaning and disinfecting or sterilizing reusable equipment before use, between each patient or when soiled using EPA-registered disinfectants labeled as effective against HIV and HBV.
 - Carefully handle and dispose of sharp instruments during and after use.

- ❑ Recommendations for potential exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP)³:
 - Treatment of an exposure site
 - ◆ Wounds and skin sites that have been in contact with blood or body fluids should be washed with soap and water; contact with the eyes and insides of the mouth and nose should be flushed with water.
 - Performing an exposure report
 - ◆ Employers should follow all federal (including OSHA) and state requirements for recording and reporting occupational injuries and exposures.
 - Evaluation of the exposure

- ◆ The exposure should be evaluated by a medical professional based on the type of body substance, the route and severity of the exposure.
- Evaluation of exposure source
 - ◆ If the HBV, HCV, and/or HIV infection status of the source person is unknown, the source person should be informed of the incident and tested.

Summary: Practicing good infection control actions in your daily work would help reduce the risk that you, a patient, or a co-worker, could be exposed to bloodborne pathogens.

References:

1. [Bloodborne Pathogens - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens-overview)
2. [CDC's Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings | Infection Control | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/core-practices/)
3. [Updated U.S. Public Health Service Guidelines for the Management of Occupational Exposures to HBV, HCV, and HIV and Recommendations for Postexposure Prophylaxis](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5712a.htm)

Additional references:

1. [Bloodborne Pathogens - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens-overview)
2. [Germs Live in and on the Body | Project Firstline | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/project-firstline/)
3. [CDC Guidance for Evaluating Health-Care Personnel for Hepatitis B Virus Protection and for Administering Postexposure Management](https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/guidelines/evaluating-health-care-personnel-for-hepatitis-b-virus-protection-and-for-administering-postexposure-management/)
4. [The ABCs of Hepatitis - for Health Professionals](https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/abc/)
5. [Prevention of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/advisory-committee/practices/)
6. [Public Health Service Inter-Agency Guidelines for Screening Donors of Blood, Plasma, Organs, Tissues, and Semen for Evidence \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/blood/organs-tissues-semen-for-evidence/)
7. [2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/isolation-precautions/)
8. [Hepatitis C Basics | HHS](https://www.hhs.gov/hepatitis/c-basics/)
9. [CDC - Bloodborne Infectious Diseases - Stop Sticks : Bloodborne Pathogens - NORA](https://www.cdc.gov/bloodborne-infectious-diseases/stop-sticks/)
10. [Germs Live in Blood | Lockscreen-needle.jpg](https://www.lockscreen-needle.com/)