

Infection Control/Bloodborne Pathogens



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Objectives

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

- State the importance of infection control for healthcare employees
- Use correct precautions to protect yourself and others
- Practice proper Hand Hygiene Procedures
- Avoid exposures to bloodborne pathogens

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To all employees:

Although healthcare employees are around many potential sources of infection, you can protect yourself and others by following your employer's infection control procedures.

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This program is required for all employees regardless of the type of job or department. It is provided to help you understand the role of the healthcare institution in protecting both patients and employees and to help you understand your responsibilities. The information is also applicable for other situations and should give you confidence in the safety of the work environment. Those employees with patient contact will receive additional education for their specific roles.



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Handwashing

- The single most important action you need to take to prevent the spread of infection is to follow good hand hygiene procedures
- It is a proven way to prevent the spread of infectious disease in all departments*



*CDC Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings

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When should I perform Hand Hygiene Procedures?



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You should wash your hands:

- At the beginning and at the end of your shift
- Before handling foods and before eating



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You should wash your hands: Cont.

- After using the toilet
- Before and after each patient contact and between tasks and procedures on the same patient



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You should wash your hands: Cont.

- Whenever contamination occurs - having any contact with blood, body fluids, excretions or mucous membranes
- After removing gloves



Note: Wearing gloves does not take the place of hand hygiene

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You should wash your hands: Cont.

- After coughing or sneezing
- After nose blowing



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To review, you should perform hand hygiene procedures:

For all employees:

- At the beginning and end of your day
- Before handling foods and before eating
- After using the toilet
- After coughing, sneezing or nose blowing

For clinical employees:

- Before and after patient contact
- Whenever contamination occurs
- After removing gloves

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Clinical staff should also perform hand hygiene procedures:

- Before putting on gloves for invasive procedures
- Before handling invasive devices, e.g., urinary catheters
- After touching any object in patient surroundings, e.g., bedrails



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How to wash hands with soap and water:



1. Adjust water to warm
2. Wet hands and wrists
3. Keep hands pointing downward to allow water to flow toward fingertips (differs from a surgical scrub)

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How to wash hands with soap and water: Cont.

4. Lather thoroughly with soap
5. Use a firm rubbing and circular motion, washing the palms, the back of each hand and each finger
6. Cover at least one inch above the wrist



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How to wash hands with soap and water: Cont.

7. Continue this motion for at least 20 seconds while singing a slow "Happy Birthday" (to yourself!)



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How to wash hands with soap and water: Cont.

8. Rinse thoroughly
9. Dry your hands beginning with fingers and moving upward with a disposable towel
10. Discard disposable towel and take a clean one to turn off the faucet



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Use of waterless alcohol-based agents

- Alcohol-based hand rubs are permitted when hands are not visibly soiled
- Be sure that dispenser is not near high temperatures or flames
- When decontaminating hands with a waterless alcohol-based agent, apply the product to the palm of one hand and rub together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry
- Store excess supplies of this product in areas approved for flammable materials



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Special Notes

- Decontaminate hands **EVEN IF GLOVES ARE WORN** and decontaminate hands immediately after gloves are removed
- When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or bloody fluids, wash hands with soap and water
- If hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand rub for decontamination of hands during patient care activities
- Before eating and after using a restroom, wash hands with soap and water

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For best results in preventing the spread of infection:

Jewelry should be removed when washing hands.

(It is best to wear minimal jewelry.)



Jewelry must be removed for surgical scrubs.

For best results in preventing the spread of infection: Cont.

- The CDC advises healthcare workers against wearing artificial nails or extenders
- Nails should be kept short without chipped polish
- Check to make sure you are following your employer's nail and jewelry policy



For best results in preventing the spread of infection: Cont.

- Use lotion to prevent breaks in your skin
- Avoid putting on gloves while hands are still wet from alcohol rub
- If using bar soap, use a small bar and rinse it before returning it to the holder
- Use holders that allow drainage



Be a Smart Employee.



Make hand hygiene a habit!



Bloodborne Pathogens & Exposure Control

Your employer has an Exposure Control plan to insure your safety. This plan is based on the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's (OSHA) **Bloodborne Pathogen** Standard.

This plan prevents job-related exposure to bloodborne pathogens – germs that are carried in the blood.

By following Standard Precautions, you will be protected from bloodborne pathogens, as well as diseases spread by all body substances.



Precautions to Prevent HCAs (Healthcare Acquired Infections)

1. **Standard Precautions** - used in the care of all patients. This considers that all blood and body fluids may be contaminated with infectious agents. Certain practices prevent the spread of germs among patients and workers in health care settings.
2. **Transmission-based Precautions** - used in the care of patients with highly transmissible diseases. Transmission-based precautions are used in addition to Standard Precautions. See Learning Harbor, Inc. Standard Precautions modules 1 and 2.

Standard Precautions include:

- Following hand hygiene guidelines
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (gloves, gowns, masks, and goggles)
- Proper cleaning and disinfecting the environment and equipment used in patient care
- Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette



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Always use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when coming into contact with:

- Blood
- Any body fluid, secretion or excretion except sweat and tears
- Broken skin and open wounds
- Mucous membranes



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Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue if coughing or sneezing
- Promptly dispose of tissues
- Perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions



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Every employee is required to use standard precautions with **all** patients, no matter what the diagnosis, even if they don't appear to be sick!



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Your employer provides:

Protective clothing and equipment such as gowns, gloves, goggles and eye protection which will reduce the possibility of your exposure to potentially infectious pathogens



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Your employer provides: Cont.

- Training on correct housekeeping procedures
- Instructions for understanding the labeling on hazardous material containers and teaching employees to be alert for this symbol *



* This orange or red BIOHAZARD symbol means potentially infectious.

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Your employer provides: Cont.

- Preventive treatment
For example, making Hepatitis B vaccinations available for employees at risk for exposure to blood and body fluids
- Employee medical records that are accurate and confidential
- Exposure treatment and follow-up



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Your employer provides: Cont.

- Engineering controls to prevent exposure, e.g. sharps containers and needleless systems
- Training in work practice controls to prevent exposure, e.g., no recapping of needles and using safe injection practices



[Click here for more information about Injection Safety from CDC](#)

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For clinical employees with direct patient contact, there are additional procedures and resources

However, **all employees** should know about bloodborne pathogens



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Bloodborne Pathogens

- Healthcare workers are at risk for exposure to **bloodborne pathogens** which can cause disease in humans, including hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Exposures may occur through needlesticks or cuts from sharp instruments contaminated with the infected patient's blood, or through contact with the eye, nose, mouth or skin with a patient's blood or body fluids.
- Most exposures do not result in infection. The risk varies with the virus, type of exposure, amount of blood involved and amount of virus in the patient's blood at the time of exposure.

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Bloodborne viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C are **not** spread by:

- Touching a patient
- Using equipment, phones, toilets/showers or drinking fountains
- Coughing or sneezing

But can be spread by:

- Sexual contact with an infected person
- Exposure to blood/body fluids, e.g., needlestick injuries
- Sharing drug needles and syringes

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What should I do if I am exposed to the blood of a patient?



- Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth or skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline or sterile irrigants
- Report the exposure to the department responsible for managing exposures and follow prescribed treatment
- Know your employer's policy!

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Treat all blood and body fluids as potentially infectious



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Immediately wash hands and other exposed skin thoroughly after contact with blood and body fluids



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Carefully dispose of used needles and sharps using special puncture-proof containers immediately after use



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Report all exposures to your supervisor immediately



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Wear protective clothing and use equipment as provided by your department. See Learning Harbor, Inc. modules Standard Precautions 1 and 2



Follow proper cleaning and disposal procedures



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For additional information:

www.cdc.gov
www.jointcommission.org
www.apic.org
www.osha.gov

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MAKE YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT A SAFER
PLACE FOR PATIENTS AND EMPLOYEES.



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