



Blood Borne Pathogens

Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission/ Health and Safety Division
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When a co-worker is injured, your first impulse is to go to their aid. But before you do, take the time to protect yourself. Deadly diseases such as hepatitis B virus (HBV) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) which causes AIDS can come between you and your good samaritan act.

HBV

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) can cause severe damage to your liver, leading to liver damage and almost certain death. It is a bigger threat than AIDS because it is a more common blood borne disease. Hepatitis B is not the type of hepatitis associated with food handling.

If you are infected with HBV:

You may feel like you have the flu;

You may be so sick that you must be hospitalized;

Your blood, saliva and other body fluids may pass on the HBV virus.

You can be vaccinated before or immediately after exposure to help prevent HBV infection.

HIV

AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is a serious illness caused by HIV, human immunodeficiency virus. HIV is transmitted primarily through sexual contact, but can also be transmitted through contact with blood and certain body fluids. Most people infected with HIV will get AIDS sooner or later. They become unable to fight infections and other diseases. Worst of all, AIDS cannot be cured.

Who Has HIV and HBV?

All kinds of people have HBV and HIV--old, young, male, female, married, single, from inner cities and small communities. To make matters worse, people can carry and spread either disease for many years while looking and feeling healthy without knowing they are infected.

Means of Transmission

HBV, HIV and other blood borne pathogens may be present in:

Blood, vaginal secretions, semen and certain other body fluids;

Body tissues or organs.

1-bloodborne pathogens

To cause infection, the virus must enter your body. Some likely ways are:

- Sexual contact with an infected partner;
- Sharing infected needles;
- Cutting yourself with a sharp object that is contaminated with infected blood or fluids
- Getting infected blood or fluids on your skin if you have open sores, nicks or cuts;
- Getting contaminated blood or fluids in the mucous membranes in your eyes, nose or mouth.

Your skin is normally a protective barrier to keep viruses out, but if you have dermatitis, acne, chapped hands or broken cuticles, you have ways for the HIV or HBV to enter your body.

Universal Precautions

Since you don't know who might be infected, the safe thing to do is to use Universal Precautions: treat all blood and body fluids as if they are infected. It only takes one exposure to become infected--Don't Take Chances. Fortunately, HIV and HBV aren't spread through the air like cold or flu germs. You can't get either disease from working alongside someone who is infected or from casual contact.

Prevention

If you choose to help an injured co-worker always take time to put on a pair of leak-proof gloves and wear them under your regular work gloves. Also, make sure you are wearing eye protection to prevent the transmission of blood borne pathogens through the eyes.

If you get blood or other potentially infectious materials on your skin, immediately wash with soap and water. If potentially infectious materials get in your eyes, nose or mouth, immediately flush with running water at a sink or eyewash fountain.

You should report any unprotected contact with blood or other bodily fluids to your supervisor so proper medical follow-up can be made.

Clean-Up

When blood or body fluids are cleaned up after an accident:

- Restrict access to the area;
- Wear two pairs of leak-proof gloves; avoid tearing gloves;
- Wear a leak-proof apron to protect your clothes;
- Do not pick up contaminated sharp objects (glass, nails, sharp metal, etc.) with your hands--sharp objects might cut both your glove and your hands.
- Use disposable towels to soak up most of the blood;
- Place all contaminated towels and waste in sealed, color-coded or labeled leak-proof container.
- Dispose of as a regulated waste.
- Clean with an appropriate disinfecting solution. A solution of 10 parts water to 1 part bleach will kill both HIV and HBV;

After cleaning, promptly disinfect mops and any other cleaning equipment. Otherwise you may spread viruses to other areas of the facility.

Date	Company Name	
Project Name	Meeting Location	Person Conducting Meeting

Items Discussed:

Problem Areas or Concerns:

Attendees:

Comments:
