

CARE FOR U PLUS

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Bloodborne Pathogens

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms that when present in a human's blood, can eventually cause disease. These pathogens are transmitted through contact with infected body fluids such as blood, semen, and vaginal secretions. Exposures occur if the skin is punctured by a contaminated needle, razor or other sharp item or when broken skin or mucous membranes are splashed with body fluid. Fortunately, most exposure do not result in infections.

Most Common Microorganisms:

- Hepatitis B (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV). These viruses can cause infections and eventually damage the liver.
- HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) attacks and weakens the immune system. This virus causes AIDS.

Warning:

- You may become infected with Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C or HIV, if you are punctured with a sharp needle or any other sharp object that has been in contact with the blood or bodily fluids of a person who has one of these infections.
- These infections can spread if infected blood or body fluids with blood come into contact with mucous membranes (such as the eyes, nose and mouth) or an open sore or a cut in the skin.

Hepatitis B:

Hepatitis B virus can cause serious liver damage and occasionally can cause death.

Symptoms may be mild and do not develop until 2 weeks or 6 months after contact with the virus and include:

- Jaundice
- Fever
- Nausea
- Abdominal pain

Probability of contracting hepatitis B Virus

- The healthcare worker who has received the hepatitis B vaccine and developed immunity to the virus is at virtually no risk of infection.
- The probability of becoming infected with hepatitis B due to a needle prick is estimated to be between 6-30% and depends on the status of the person's hepatitis B antigen.
- Healthcare workers' infections have decreased by 95% annually since the hepatitis B vaccine availability in 1982

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The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV):

HIV is an infection that can damage the immune system by destroying the infection-fighting white blood cells.

- The chance of becoming infected with the HIV virus due to a needle prick is 0.3%.
- There is no vaccine for HIV
- There is no cure, but there are many drugs that fight the infection and reduce the risk of infecting others.
- The first symptoms of HIV may be inflammation of the nodes and later may have weight loss, mild fever, night sweats, and flu-like symptoms. Also, the infected person is more vulnerable to pneumonia, intestinal disorders and mycotic infections.
- It can cause AIDS, which is known as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. It is the final stage of HIV infection.

Prevention: Use Universal Precautions:

When there is the possibility of being in contact with blood, bodily fluids, mucous membranes or areas of open skin, you should use standard precautions before performing tasks such as bathing, helping with the use of the bathroom, changing diapers, cleaning the bathroom or toiletries, helping with cuts/wounds, nose bleeds and helping with mouth care:

- Wash hands prior with antibacterial soap.
- Put on gloves.
- Wash hands after removing gloves with antibacterial soap.
- *Washing hands is the most effective way to prevent infection!*

Prevention of Hepatitis and HIV Infections:

- Cleaning:
 - Evaluate the area to be cleaned
 - Gather cleaning supplies
- The cleansing solutions that could be used are:
 - Bleach- proper mix of 1:10
 - Hydrogen peroxide
 - Other disinfectant solutions approved for use against pathogens
- A narrow range of interests or intense interest in certain topics