

Blood Borne Pathogens Information Sheet for Volunteers

This information is designed to assist you in knowing how to avoid and deal with possible exposure to blood borne pathogens. If you would like more information, the Y offers a monthly New Staff and Volunteer Orientation that goes into more detail. The American Red Cross also offers several classes on this topic.

What are Blood Borne Pathogens (BBPs)?

BBPs are communicable viruses that are passed from person to person through interpersonal contact with infectious blood or through other bodily fluids.

Two Most Prevalent Types:

A. HIV/AIDS

1. HIV is the name of the virus. A person with HIV may be symptom-free until it develops into AIDS.
2. The virus is very weak. It cannot survive long outside of the body or on environmental surfaces.
3. The virus cannot be transmitted by sweat, tears or insects.
4. An infected person's blood remains contagious, and there is no cure.

B. HBV (Hepatitis B)

1. HBV affects the liver and its functions in the body.
2. Unlike HIV, this virus is very hardy and can survive on a surface up to 10 days.
3. About 1/3 of the carriers of HBV don't have symptoms and don't know they have it; 1/3 have mild flu-like symptoms; and 1/3 have severe symptoms and require hospitalization.
4. 10% of all people with HBV are chronic carriers of the disease and many do not even know they have it.

How do I protect myself?

1. Wear gloves before approaching a situation involving potentially infectious material: blood or any bodily fluids.
2. Use a mouth shield when performing CPR.
3. Practice good hand-washing and thorough drying procedures: after removing gloves, after using the bathroom and before handling any food.
4. Obtain the HBV vaccinations, which can produce 97% effective antibodies and last for approximately 7 years.
5. Use a mechanical device (broom and dustpan or tongs) to pick up sharp objects (broken glass, etc) rather than your hands. Wrap and/or tape sharp objects in cardboard for disposal.
6. Label bio-hazardous waste and dispose of materials correctly.
7. Use an approved virucide or 1/10 solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) in a labeled bottle. (See next section for cleaning up a potentially virulent spill.)
8. Practice good housekeeping and keep work areas clean.
9. Use Universal Precautions: Treat everyone as if they are carriers of the disease!

How do I clean up an accident?

1. Put on gloves before approaching a scene with potentially infectious fluids.
2. Cover the contaminated area with paper towels.
3. Saturate with an approved sanitizer/virucide. (Or use a 1:10 solution: 1 part bleach to 10 parts water in a labeled bottle. Bleach solutions must be mixed only at the time of use.)
4. Wipe the area and dispose of the paper towels in the designated biohazard bag.
5. Repeat until material has been removed from area.
6. Re-spray area and allow to air dry for 10 minutes.
7. Wipe the area again.
8. Properly remove gloves to prevent contamination.
9. Properly dispose of materials. Label biohazard waste and sharps or use the proper disposable materials (bright orange or red bags or containers marked with the black emblem.)

What do I do when/if I come in direct contact with blood or an infectious bodily fluid?

1. If you were wearing protective barriers and nothing touched exposed skin, it is not an exposure incident.
2. If contact was made, stabilize the situation, then immediately stop what you are doing and contact your physician to determine the need for potential exposure assessment.
3. If tested and the result is positive, an HBIG vaccination (85% effective in preventing the virus from manifesting) may be offered.