

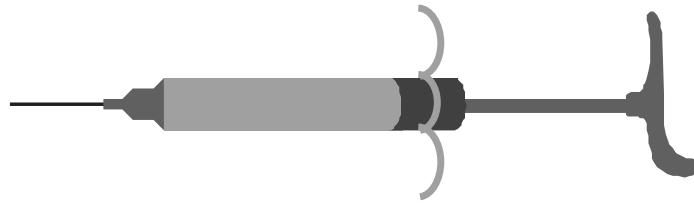
Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids in the Workplace

Has something happened that exposed you to someone else's blood?

Was there a cut or puncture to your skin?

Did you bleed from the injury?

Did you get blood in your eye (s) or in your mouth?



If you said "YES" to any of the above, read the following to see what you should do.

1. IMMEDIATELY:

a) For a needlepoke or cut

- ◆ DO wash with soap and water
- ◆ DO apply a sterile dressing in necessary
- ◆ DO NOT encourage bleeding or apply bleach

b) For a splash

- ◆ rinse mucus membrane well with lots of tepid water or saline

2. GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OF THE HOSPITAL FOR ASSESSMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (WITHIN 2 HRS.)

Q: Do I need to go to the hospital?

A: Yes!

You may need medication or vaccination after an exposure. If you need medication it should be started right away.

Q: How do I know if I need treatment?

A: The Emergency Room Doctor will discuss with you what treatment you need once s/he knows the details of your exposure. Be prepared to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What happened? Were you injured by a needle, a scalpel, or other equipment? Was it a splash?
2. When and where did the injury occur?

3. Do you know whose blood you were exposed to? Be prepared to give the person's name for contact follow-up.
4. Have you ever been vaccinated against Hepatitis B? Did you complete the series? You will need to discuss your Hepatitis B immunization as this information will help to ensure your exposure is well assessed.

3. REPORTING

Q: Who do I report to?

A: Supervisor/Manager

Notify your Supervisor/Manager that you have been to the hospital Emergency Department immediately upon your return.

Q: What forms do I need to complete?

A: WorkSafeBC Form 6A

The Workers' Report of Injury (Form 6A) is available from your Supervisor/Manager.

HERE ARE THE ANSWERS TO SOME MORE QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE:

Q: What testing will I need?

A: You may need blood tests for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV (AIDS Virus). All results from these tests are private and shared only with you, and, if you agree, with your Family Doctor.

Q: Do I have to take these blood tests?

A: No, however; if you are filing a claim with the WorkSafeBC, blood testing is recommended.

Q: Why do you need to know whose blood I was exposed to?

A: If we know whose blood it is, every effort will be made to find out if the person has any infections in his/her blood. If s/he has no infections, you can stop precautions and medications.

Q: Do I need to take medication?

A: The Emergency Room Physician may offer you medication to prevent HIV (AIDS Virus) infection. Often this can be stopped within a few days once the blood test results are available.

Q: How often do I need blood tests?

A: Usually once at the time of exposure; however, you might need blood tests at 6, 12, and 24 weeks and again one year after the exposure.

Q: Could I spread a disease from this exposure to my family or friends?

A: While awaiting the test results, you should take the following precautions:

1. Do not become pregnant.
2. If sexually active, use safe sex practice with your partner and do not allow the exchange of body fluids. You should use latex condoms with a water-soluble lubricant, e.g. KY Jelly. Do **not** use petroleum-based lubricants such as Vaseline. Oral sex is less risky but not completely risk free.
3. Do not donate blood, organs, semen or breast milk.
4. If you are given medication for HIV (AIDS virus) prevention, avoid consumption of alcohol.
5. Do not share shaving equipment or toothbrushes.
6. If breastfeeding a child, discontinue breastfeeding whether or not you take therapy. This precaution is to prevent HIV transmission to your child in the event that you become infected. Breast milk can be pumped and discarded and nursing can be resumed once it is determined that the source is negative or your HIV tests indicate you have not become infected.

This can be a frightening experience. Do not hesitate to talk to University Health Services or your Family Doctor, if you wish more information. Counseling is available through the UVic Employee Assistance Program.

Medical information provided by the Capital Health Region

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