

As per the findings from the office of Risk Managements (ORM) audit, it was suggested that the university develop an information sheet on bloodborne pathogens that covers universal precautions, routes of exposure, methods of protection and procedures to follow in the event of an exposure and cover this information with all the employees during a safety meeting. Please read the following information and sign the attached sign-off sheet.

Bloodborne pathogens are organisms that cause diseases. These diseases are spread by contact with blood or body fluids contaminated with blood. The three viruses of special concern are HIV, HBV and HCV. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS is a serious disease. Although many people infected with HIV go on to develop AIDS, the number who develop serious illness and who die from AIDS is decreasing due to recent treatments. Hepatitis B and hepatitis C are both viral infections that affect the liver. If you become infected with HBV or HCV, you may have no symptoms at all or you may feel like you have an intestinal flu. Or you may be so sick you have to be hospitalized. Eventually, you could even die from these diseases. To protect yourself from HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, you must understand the risk of contracting them. HIV, HBV and HCV are not as easy to catch as many other viruses. You can't catch them from eating utensils, water fountains, gym equipment, swimming pools or insects, including mosquitoes. They don't spread through the air like cold and flu germs, so you won't get them from working alongside someone who is infected, from touching or even from a kiss on the cheek.

HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C are primarily spread by three types of body fluids: blood, vaginal secretions and semen. To actually get one of these diseases, the virus must get inside your body. This most commonly happens during sex with an infected partner or when intravenous drug users share needles that are contaminated. The viruses also can be passed from pregnant women to their unborn infants.

Because of the way HIV, HBV, HCV are spread, you aren't likely to get them during the normal course of the workday. But it could happen in certain unusual circumstances:

1. You have open sores or cuts and get infected blood on them while helping an injured coworker.
2. You cut yourself with glass or a needle that is contaminated with blood or body fluids from an infected person.
3. You get contaminated blood or other potentially infectious materials in your eyes, nose or mouth.

Normally, your skin acts as a protective barrier to keep viruses out. But even tiny breaks or cracks in the skin from common conditions like dermatitis, acne or cuts and scratches can be "doorways" for HIV, HBV, HCV to enter your body.

To protect yourself during an accident or injury:

1. Protect yourself before offering assistance.
2. Wear leak-proof gloves.
3. Cover your eyes with goggles or other protection.
4. Keep blood off you while you control bleeding.
5. Comfort the victim.

6. Wait for trained emergency responders.

If you get blood on you:

1. Wash it off as soon as possible with non-abrasive soap and water.
2. Immediately flush your eyes with running water at a sink or eyewash fountain.
3. Report the incident to your supervisor.

In an emergency:

1. Don't touch blood or body fluids without wearing gloves.
2. Use a pocket mask to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
3. Put on leak-proof gloves before you help injured persons.
4. Wear goggles and other face protection if blood is spraying.

If you get blood or body fluids on your gloves, clothes or shoes:

1. Remove them as soon as possible.
2. Place them in a sealed bag.
3. Wash exposed skin with non-abrasive soap and water.

If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, HBV, or HCB:

1. Don't panic.
2. Report the incident immediately.
3. Try to determine the source of the blood or body fluid, or even get a sample.
4. Take part in testing, counseling and any follow-up steps that your employer advises.