

Universal Precautions for Bloodborne Pathogens

Universal precautions – a method of infection control (recommended by [the Centers for Disease and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) – in which all human blood and certain body fluids of human origin are handled as if they are known to be infected with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and/or other bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions refer to safeguards that are taken to help keep everyone protected and healthy when there may be a potential to come into contact with blood or other body fluids. Universal precautions are extremely important in the health care field to prevent the spread of infection, but all workplaces need to be aware of and prepared to use universal precautions if it becomes necessary. There is always a chance that a person in any type of work area setting could cut himself. Each person should thus be trained on how to use universal precautions.

It is recommended that everyone use universal precautions whenever coming into contact with blood and other body fluids. Remember: If there is an accident and there are body fluids involved, there is always a potential for the spread of a disease.

Universal precautions apply to:

- blood
- bodily fluids containing visible blood
- semen
- vaginal fluid
- cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic fluids
- needles, scalpels and other sharp instruments contaminated with above mentioned materials

Diseases that can be passed by body fluids do not discriminate based on amount. Just because there is not a torrent of blood, does not mean that it is safe!

What Universal Precautions Should Individuals Take?

The first and most important precaution is to use **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**. PPE creates a barrier between the person and fluid contact. One barrier is gloves (latex or non-latex). Other barriers that can be added include eye protection, gowns or aprons, shoe covers, masks, and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) barrier devices.

Take extreme caution to **avoid accidental wounds from sharp instruments.**

Blood or other potentially infectious material spill should be cleaned up and decontaminated promptly. An accident that results in an exposure with body fluids should be **immediately reported** to the supervisor/instructor!

Dispose of any items touched by body fluid in a biohazard bag (red bag with biohazard sign).

If a breakable item becomes contaminated with body fluids and falls to the floor and breaks, use a broom and dustpan, tongs or forceps to pick it up; **never pick up with hands** even if gloves are worn. Deposit the contaminated sharps objects into a puncture resistant sharps container with biohazard symbol.

Always wash your hands with soap and water after removing your PPE.

*Please contact the Environmental Health & Safety Office (EH&S) at 817-272-2185
with any questions or concerns.*