

# Standard Precautions

## WHAT ARE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS?

Standard Precautions are work practices required for the basic level of infection control and are recommended for the treatment and care of all patients at all times. Standard Precautions are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection to a susceptible host. Standard Precautions applies to the following body fluids:

- Blood
- Body tissues or organs
- Semen
- Vaginal secretions
- Other body fluids including: Cerebrospinal fluid, Synovial fluid, Pleural fluid, Pericardial fluid, Peritoneal fluid, Amniotic fluid

## STANDARD PRECAUTIONS INCLUDE:

**Hand washing** - Washing hands is the #1 way to stop germs from spreading. Be certain to use soap and water before and after providing patient care/ first aid. Wash hands immediately after exposure to blood or body fluids and after removing disposable gloves. Antiseptic cleansers or towelettes should only be used with routine washing, not after an exposure.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Protective barriers should be worn when working with blood or blood products or any waste that may contain blood or moist body fluids. PPE includes: gloves, gowns, boots, masks, and goggles.

- **Gloves**: Clean, non-sterile gloves should be used when coming into contact with blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Apply gloves just before touching mucous membranes or contacting blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions and remove gloves promptly after use. Be sure to discard gloves before touching non-contaminated items or environmental surfaces, and before providing care to another patient. Always wash hands immediately after removing gloves.
- **Gowns**: Fluid resistant, non-sterile gowns protect clothes from contamination during activities that may generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions. Be certain to apply a gown prior to performing such activities.
- **Mask, face shield, eye protection**: This type of PPE protects the eyes, nose, mouth and mucous membranes from exposure to sprays or splashes of blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions. Apply appropriate protection prior to performing such activities.
- **Aseptic Practices**: Be sure to avoid contamination of clothing and the transfer of microorganisms to other patients, surfaces and environments by cleaning, disinfecting or reprocessing non-disposable equipment before reuse with another patient. Single use items should be discarded appropriately.
- **Safe handling of potentially infectious material**:
  - **Do not recap, shear, or break needles**: The only exceptions are certain procedures or circumstances that may require recapping or removal of contaminated needles; however, it should not be construed that these two actions are acceptable as a general practice. Examples of these circumstances include: blood gas analysis; administration of incremental

doses of medication to the same patient; arterial line blood draws; and radioisotope administration. This recapping or needle removal must be accomplished through the use of a mechanical device or one-handed technique. **NEVER USE YOUR HANDS TO REMOVE THE NEEDLE!!**

- **Sharps Disposal:** Use disposable needles and discard needles and sharp objects in biohazard labeled, puncture-resistant, leak-proof containers. Do not fill these containers past the full-line or to over-flowing.
  - **Regulated Waste:** Place any material contaminated with over 30 cc. (assume over 30cc if dripping wet) visible blood, potentially infectious body fluid, purulent body drainage or a piece of body tissue in a red biohazard bag. This is considered regulated waste and must be labeled so that the material may be properly discarded.
  - **Do not pick up broken glass with bare hands:** Wear utility gloves and either sweep up the broken glass with a broom and dust pan or use forceps to dispose of broken glass such as light bulbs, test tubes, or beakers that may have contained blood or body fluids. If emptying garbage cans that may contain blood or body fluids, wear gloves (utility). If in doubt, play it safe and protect yourself.
  - **Never pipette or suction** potentially infectious fluid with your mouth!
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- **Environmental Controls:** Do NOT keep food or drink in an area with BBP exposure potential. Do not eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or lip balm or handle contact lenses in work areas with potential for exposure.