



Southwest Washington Workers'
Compensation Trust

Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids - What Teachers Need To Know

Teachers may come into contact with blood and other body fluids at work. To protect yourself, it is important to understand the possible danger of exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) and ways to minimize that risk.

Bloodborne pathogens can cause infection by entering the body through open cuts, skin abrasions, dermatitis (if skin is broken), acne and mucous membranes (mouth, eyes and nose). The most common diseases carried by blood are Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV/AIDS.

To reduce the chance of infection from bloodborne diseases:

- Practice universal precautions. You should consider every person, all blood and body fluids to be potential carriers of infectious disease and protect yourself when in contact with blood and other body fluids.
- Wear gloves anytime you may come into contact with blood or OPIM. Disposable gloves should only be used once and then disposed of.
- Consider getting vaccinated. A vaccine is available that will protect you against hepatitis B.
- Always wash your hands after using the bathroom, handling any body fluids, or removing gloves. If water and soap are not immediately available, an antiseptic hand sanitizer may be used as a temporary measure until you can get to soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect all hard, soiled, washable surfaces immediately. Commercial disinfectants or a 10% bleach-to-water solution (10 parts water to one part household bleach) may be used.
- Never pick up broken glass with your bare hands. Always wear gloves, use tongs or a broom and dustpan.
- Use a one-way resuscitation device if performing CPR.
- Dispose of contaminated gloves and waste into a plastic bag.
- Make sure your building first aid kit is fully stocked.

If you are exposed to another person's blood or OPIM, as soon as possible:

- Flush the exposed area with water.
- Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.
- Report the incident to your supervisor.

Here is an easy to follow guideline to protect yourself:

If it's wet and not yours, don't touch it!