

# Universal Precautions

## "Universal Precautions"-what does this mean?



**"UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS" ARE AN APPROACH TO INFECTION CONTROL. ACCORDING TO THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS, ALL HUMAN BLOOD AND CERTAIN HUMAN BODY FLUIDS ARE TREATED AS IF KNOWN TO BE INFECTIOUS FOR HIV, AND OTHER BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS.**

**THIS METHOD OF INFECTION CONTROL CAME ABOUT BECAUSE PEOPLE WITH BLOODBORNE INFECTIOUS DISEASES ARE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY AND, IN MANY CASES, MAY NOT SHOW SYMPTOMS UP TO 10 YEARS AFTER EXPOSURE OR EVEN LAB EVIDENCE OF INFECTION FOR SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER EXPOSURE, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY STILL TRANSMIT THE VIRUS TO OTHERS.**

# What does "universal precautions" look like to me in the school?

- For the most part, **the use of universal precautions will consist of the use of gloves when handling blood or body secretions .**
- ~Contaminated hands are a prime cause of cross infections  
~**Hand washing is the most important and most basic technique in preventing and controlling the transmission of germs**

# Gloves should be worn any time a provider (that's you):

- has an **open lesion** on the hands;
- handles **contaminated disposable items** such as tissues, diapers, clothing;
- has any **hand contact** with blood or body fluids
- especially when providing **clean up of body fluid spills** such as vomit, blood, feces, urine, and when rendering first aid and diapering assistance.
- Remember to **remove your soiled gloves and washing your hands** before touching any cabinets, doorknobs, or items other people may come in contact with.

# What else can I do to protect myself from contracting infectious diseases at work?

Other personal protection:

- avoid **rubbing or touching your eyes** ,
- refrain from **kissing or being kissed** , and
- **use your own personal care items** such as drinking glasses and utensils (unless shared items are properly cleaned). Outside of your work site use your own personal care items such as razors and toothbrushes

The most important protection you can use for preventing the spread of communicable diseases is to :

WASH YOUR HANDS

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WASH YOUR HANDS .... especially....

- before drinking or eating,
- before handling clean utensils, equipment or food,
- after going to the bathroom,
- after contact with any body secretions,
- after handling any soiled diapers, garments or equipment,
- after caring for children, especially those with any body secretion discharges, and
- **always wash your hands before applying and after the removal of gloves.**

# Proper hand washing should consist of:

- **Use of soap or other disinfectant if away from campus**
- **Friction**
- **Use of warm running water**
- **Drying thoroughly to prevent chapping**

# What should I do if I am exposed to blood/secretions?

- Ideally, **you should be wearing gloves** when handling body secretion in accordance with universal precautions, but at times when you have had exposure or the gloves have not provided the protection you have needed, wash your hands or area of exposure as soon as possible after the exposure occurred.
- If you have a question on whether you have experienced an incident that may need a medical evaluation, you should contact the school nurse **as soon as possible after the incident** . You may also reference the **Washington West Exposure Control Plan**.



- Disinfectants are available to staff and should be used on **hard surfaces, athletic mats, counter tops** and any other surfaces that have had exposure to blood and other body fluids. Towels, preferably disposable, must be used for **one individual only** and then placed in the appropriate receptacle. Mops must be **rinsed with disinfectants** and use of gloves is required.
- Remember, Hepatitis B retains infectivity for at least 1 month at room temperature. As with any type of cleaning agents used around children, safety within the setting must be assured and **chemicals should be properly labeled** in accordance with school building housekeeping practices. **Do not use any supplies of your own** without checking with your building custodian.

# What do I do with contaminated items in my classroom or health room?

- **Sharps** such as syringes and sharps for self-checking and self-administration of insulin on school grounds, or other items such as broken glass should be placed in a **disposable container** which is closable, puncture resistant, leak proof on all sides and bottom, and properly labeled.
- Items that have sharp edges must not be picked up by hand. Use tongs or brooms and dustpans to prevent the risk of penetrating intact skin or gloves.
- If you have students performing health duties on campus that involve syringes and other skin puncturing activities that the building school nurse is unaware of, please contact the school nurse to supply you with the appropriate containers and instructions.
- Other items in your classroom that may be soiled or need discarding should be placed in a **plastic lined, leak resistant container, puncture resistant (if containing contaminated sharps) and properly labeled** in accordance with disposal of contaminated wastes. Please contact the custodial staff for specific concerns.