



What are Bloodborne Pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens (BBP) are microorganisms that can cause disease when transferred from an infected person to another person through blood or other potentially infected body fluids. The microorganisms can cause serious illness and death. The most common diseases spread in this manner are Hepatitis B (HBV) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Examples of other bloodborne diseases include malaria, Hepatitis C, and syphilis.

Who is at Risk?

Workers in health care and public safety jobs could be potentially exposed to these disease pathogens. Non-health care workers may become exposed at work while providing help to an injured co-worker and coming in contact with the injured person's blood or body fluids.

How can you become exposed?

Exposure to bloodborne pathogens may occur in many ways. Any kind of opening or break in the skin provides a place for infected blood or fluids to enter your body. Scrapes, cuts, rashes, burns and other minor injuries that create an opening in the skin are entryways for bloodborne pathogens. Your eyes, nose and mouth are mucous membranes, and are also openings for diseases to enter.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are methods of protecting yourself from bloodborne pathogens. Universal precautions assume all body fluids are infected with bloodborne pathogens.

Universal precautions include:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – to be always used to prevent skin or mucous membrane contact with bodily fluids. Always inspect PPE for cracks, holes, or other damage. Never use damaged PPE. PPE examples include, gloves, eye goggles, face shields, etc.

Wash hands or other skin surfaces thoroughly and immediately if contaminated.

If you think you've been exposed

If you have come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious bodily fluids, you've been involved in an exposure incident. Stay calm, wash yourself thoroughly, and report to your supervisor right away. Inform your supervisor of how, when, where and whose blood you came in contact with. If you've been involved in an exposure incident, seek medical attention. A medical professional will provide you with appropriate testing, treatment, and education.

More Information

For more detailed information and updates, visit the website:

<https://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainingPrevention/TrainingKits/BloodBornePathogens/default.asp>