

Handling Blood and Other Body Substances

Handling blood and other body substances (standard precautions)

To minimise the risk of spread of infection, all blood and body substances should be treated as potentially infectious. The techniques used in handling these substances are known as standard precautions.

Standard precautions are recommended in the handling of:

- > blood, including dried blood
- > all other body substances including saliva, urine and faeces (but excluding sweat), regardless of whether they contain visible blood
- > broken skin
- > mucous membranes (lining of nose, mouth and genitals).

Standard precautions are good hygiene practices relating to hand hygiene, the use of gloves and other protective clothing (as appropriate), and the safe disposal of waste.

Managing exposure to blood or other body substances

If any person has contact with blood or body fluids, the following procedures should be observed:

- > Remove contaminated clothing.
- > If blood or body fluids get on the skin, irrespective of whether there are cuts or abrasions, wash well with soap and water.
- > If the eyes are splashed, rinse the area gently but thoroughly with water while the eyes are open.
- > If blood or body fluid gets in the mouth, spit it out and rinse the mouth with water several times, spitting the water out each time.
- > Incidents occurring at work should be reported immediately to the supervisor or occupational health, safety and welfare officer.
- > Incidents occurring outside of work should be reported immediately to a doctor or the Emergency Department at the nearest hospital. If a person thinks they have been exposed to HIV, there is a four-week treatment that may prevent them becoming infected. They can call the South Australian 24 hour Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) triage hotline on 1800 022 226, or ask their local doctor, sexual health clinic or emergency department for more information.

Surface cleaning of blood and body substances

If blood or body fluids are spilled on surfaces, the following cleaning procedures should be used:

- > Deal with the spill as soon as possible.
- > Protect yourself by wearing disposable rubber gloves. Eye protection and a plastic apron should be worn where there is a risk of splashing.
- > Remove as much of the spill as possible with a paper towel.
- > Clean area with warm water and detergent, using a disposable cleaning cloth or sponge. The area should be left clean and dry.
- > Disinfect the area with a solution of household bleach, diluted according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- > Remove and dispose of gloves, paper towel and cleaning cloth in a sealed plastic bag after use. The plastic bag may then be thrown away with household waste.
- > Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

- > **Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)**
- > **Hepatitis B**
- > **Hepatitis C**
- > **HIV**