



## Child Care Workers and Bloodborne Pathogens

Like anyone working with young children, child care providers are inevitably exposed to blood at some point in their working lives. Children are prone to bloody noses and frequently fall, suffer cuts and scrapes, and sometimes get into fights.

For this reason, it is of the utmost importance that providers familiarize themselves with bloodborne pathogens - diseases transmitted through exposure to infected blood or body fluids that contain infected blood - and how to protect themselves from becoming infected.

The three most prevalent bloodborne pathogens are HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. They are transmitted through blood, semen and vaginal fluids. Urine, tears, sweat and vomit do not transmit bloodborne diseases unless contaminated with infectious blood.

Casual contact does not transmit bloodborne diseases. You cannot contract a bloodborne disease from touching, hugging or kissing; sharing pots, pans, forks or spoons; using a public restroom or swimming pool; or coughing or sneezing.

In order to contract a bloodborne disease, blood or blood-containing body fluids from an infected person must be introduced directly into your bloodstream through a needlestick, a cut or opening in your skin or through mucous membranes in the eyes, nose or mouth.

Child care providers are typically exposed to bloodborne pathogens when diapering, toileting, feeding or cleaning up the vomit of children in their care; breaking up fights between children; or if bitten by a child.

Follow these simple steps to protect yourself from bloodborne illnesses:

- Assume everyone, including the children in your care, is infected (practice universal precaution).
- Always wear disposable gloves when coming into contact with blood or other body fluids. Remove gloves carefully to avoid contamination.
- Always wash your hands before putting on and after removing gloves – this is essential! Scrub vigorously.
- Get vaccinated against Hepatitis B.



If you believe you have been exposed to a bloodborne pathogen, immediately wash the affected area with soap and water; report the incident to the appropriate personnel and/or agency; and see one of the medical providers on your provider panel. Contact your supervisor for more information.