



## Bloodborne Pathogens (BBPs)

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious, disease-causing microorganisms in blood and bodily fluids. Workers in many occupations, including first responders, custodial personnel, nurses, and healthcare workers are at high risk for exposure to bloodborne pathogens. However, *anyone* who administers first could be exposed to bloodborne pathogens.

### Universal Precautions

The best approach is to adopt Universal Precautions to infection control, meaning that you should treat *all* blood and certain body fluids as if they were known to be infectious. Assume the worst and protect yourself accordingly.

### What Diseases are Caused by exposure to BBP?

- The three most prevalent bloodborne pathogens are HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.

### How are BBPs transmitted?

- BBPs 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.

### Protect yourself from bloodborne illnesses:

- Practice universal precautions:
  - 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 and thoroughly!



***If you believe you have been exposed to a bloodborne pathogen, immediately wash the affected area with soap and water and report the incident to your supervisor (or equivalent).***