

# Bloodborne Pathogen Exposures

*How You Can  
Protect Yourself  
in the Workplace*



## Bloodborne Pathogens

Pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, Hepatitis B virus (HBV), Hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

### What classifies as a bloodborne pathogen exposure?

- Needlestick injury
- Blood on intact and non-intact skin
- Splash of body fluid
- Bloody fluid in your eye or on mucous membrane
- Unprotected sex



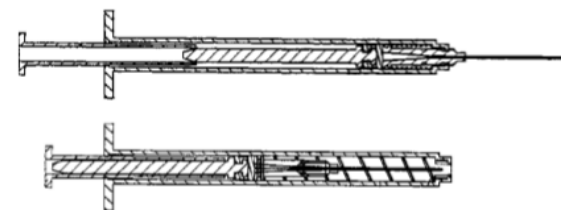
### What is considered a *body fluid*?

A body fluid includes semen, vaginal secretions, urine, saliva, blood, sweat, tears, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, and any fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood.



## Current Bloodborne Pathogen Information

A bloodborne pathogen exposure should be considered an emergency. *Note: an emergency is defined here as an event that requires seeking immediate medical attention.*



A *retractable needle* is a device aimed to reduce bloodborne pathogen exposures in healthcare workers and patients.

The Center for Disease Control recommends that if a person is exposed to a bloodborne pathogen, he/she should be treated *as soon as possible* and especially within the time frame of 24 hours.

Your employer should have a bloodborne pathogen exposure control plan under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.



## What Should I Do if I am Exposed?



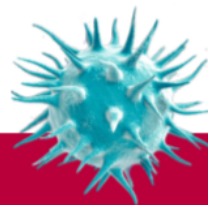
- Step 1:** Wash the exposed area with water and clean any wound with soap and water or a skin disinfectant if available.
- Step 2:** Report the incident to your employer *immediately*.
- Step 3:** Seek a physician to discuss your exposure and get the source patient's HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C status.
- Step 4:** If prescribed antivirals or given other treatment, start as soon as possible.
- Step 5:** Continue to follow up with your physician or occupational health practitioner for additional laboratory testing and source patient results.



## Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) *Bloodborne Pathogen Standard*

*The standard requires your employer to:*

- Establish an exposure control plan
- Update the exposure control plan annually
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, gowns, eye protection, and masks
- Make available Hepatitis B vaccinations to all workers with occupational exposure
- Make available post-exposure evaluation and follow-up to any occupationally exposed worker who experiences an exposure incident
- Use labels and signs to communicate hazards
- Maintain worker medical and training records



## Resources:

**Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)**

1-800-321-6742

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

1-800-232-4636

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

**National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH)**

1-800-232-4636

[www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

**Federal Drug Administration (FDA)**

for unsafe devices. i.e. needles.

[www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch)

1-888-463-6332

## In Massachusetts:

**Department of Public Health**

1-617-624-6000 or 1-617-624-5621

[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)

**Massachusetts Nurses Association**

*Division of Health and Safety*

1-781-821-4625

[www.massnurses.org](http://www.massnurses.org)

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