

Appendix B

Universal Precautions

The following has been adapted and/or excerpted from information/pamphlets from the Public Health Department. Please ask your Coordinator or Regional Coordinator should you require more information or clarification of this information.

Communicable diseases refer to a host of diseases that can be spread or passed from one person to another. Some are spread easily through casual contact with droplets from nose and mouth, while others can only be transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected person. A list of Reportable Communicable Diseases in B.C. is included in Appendix D.

Universal Precautions have been developed by the Public Health Department to help prevent the spread of communicable disease. Universal Precautions will help protect against and prevent infection. The idea behind Universal Precautions is that all people are potential carriers of any number of infectious germs. As we don't always know when a communicable disease or infection is present, we recommend you use Universal Precautions in your routines at all times. This will help to protect you, your co-workers and the individuals you support. Precautions may take some time getting used to, but soon they become just another of your many habits. You can follow these routines while respecting the dignity of the people you support.

Universal Precautions include:

- Washing hands for 60 seconds using soap and warm running water and drying hands well, both before and after contact.
- Covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze, then washing your hands. Don't pass your germs on to others.
- If required, locating emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation devices in areas where the need for resuscitation is predictable.
- Using disposable paper products in routine situations, whenever possible (e.g. from Kleenex to disposable towels).
- Not sharing toiletry items, especially toothbrushes or razors, under any circumstances. Dispose of razors carefully.
- Covering all open skin lesions (cuts, nicks, scrapes, wounds etc.) of any person.
- Using refuse containers provided to ensure the correct disposal of soiled items.
- Washing sinks out thoroughly with warm soapy water and rinsing well.
- Using disposable gloves at all times when handling blood or body fluids; being particularly careful if you have open sores on your hands (e.g. eczema, pulled hangnails, cuts or scrapes).

- Wearing disposable gloves when handling laundry contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- Being very careful when providing personal care, such as hair, nail and related services involving close personal contact, as there is a risk of infected blood coming in contact with open tissue (e.g. cuts, nicks or scrapes). When providing personal care services be sure to apply the above good hygiene practices including sterilizing any instruments (e.g. scissors) before using with another supported individual.
- Wearing protective gloves, clothing and eye coverings when performing procedures involving more extensive contact with blood.
- Handling all sharp instruments with extraordinary care and disposing sharp instruments in puncture-resistant containers.

Basic sterilization and disinfectant procedures are recommended as adequate to sterilize and disinfect equipment and areas contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Disinfectant and sterilization procedures include:

- Cleaning reusable instruments, then sterilizing by boiling in water for 10 minutes.
- Storing any clothing, bedding etc. that has been soiled with blood or other body fluids in a plastic bag and washing it with bleach. Remember that while soiled linen and clothing may be contaminated, the risk of actually transmitting disease from this source is negligible; however, it is safer to take precautions.
- Scrubbing boots and leather goods soiled with blood or other body fluids with soap and hot water to remove contamination.
- Using a 1:10 bleach solution or other approved disinfectant to clean soiled surfaces. Mops should be thoroughly rinsed in disinfectant afterwards.

All evidence indicates that blood-borne and sexually transmitted diseases are not transmitted during the preparation and serving of foods and beverages. However, when preparing and serving food, the practice of good personal hygiene and standard food sanitation procedures should always be followed.