

# **BLOODBORNE AND AIRBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE PROTOCOL**

*Effective August 15, 2017*



## What Are Bloodborne Pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Exposures may occur through needle sticks or cuts from other sharp instruments contaminated with an infected patient's blood or through contact of the eye, nose, mouth, or skin with a patient's blood.

## What to Do When a Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Occurs:

If you experience a contaminated needle stick or sharps cut, or are exposed to the blood or other body fluid of a patient during the course of your work, immediately follow these steps:

- Wash needle sticks and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigates
- Report the incident to your Ivy Tech instructor and clinical supervisor
- Immediately seek medical evaluation and treatment by a medical professional. Do not wait.
- Source testing of blood to determine infectious disease status is preferred whenever possible where consent has been obtained. When an exposure occurs at a clinical facility, you should follow that facility's policy as they will handle notice and consent with the source. When an exposure occurs at an Ivy Tech facility, the instructor should advise the source following an incident and ask if the source will consent to testing at a medical provider of his or her choosing.
- Review these suggested resources:
  - *Exposure to Blood: What Healthcare Personnel Need to Know* (CDC):  
[http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/pdfs/bbp/Exp\\_to\\_Blood.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/pdfs/bbp/Exp_to_Blood.pdf)
  - *Emergency Needle Stick Information* (CDC):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/emergnedl.html>
  - Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) Resources:  
<http://nccc.ucsf.edu/clinical-resources/pep-resources/pep-quick-guide/>

**For clean needle/sharp sticks**, wash the affected area with soap and water. You do not need to seek medical care unless there is a visible injury which requires attention. Report the incident to your Ivy Tech instructor and clinical supervisor.

## Where to Seek Treatment:

- You may seek treatment at the clinical site (if equipped and willing), an urgent care facility, emergency room, or physician office for assessment, diagnosis, and treatment. It remains your responsibility to obtain the initial appointment and any follow-ups ordered with a health care provider of your choice. If an incident occurs in an Ivy Tech classroom, lab or facility, an instructor cannot provide evaluation, diagnostic test or treatment beyond first aid and emergency assistance.

- Time of day and facility capability may impact where you seek treatment. The key is to know your options before an accident, and then, obtain an evaluation and treatment as soon as possible from a health care provider of your choosing.
- Report the incident to your Ivy Tech instructor and submit a *Student Accident Report* promptly, but no later than 24 hours. The accident report is a web-form completed via MyIvy > Student > Student Resources > Policies & Procedures or at [www.ivytech.edu/accident](http://www.ivytech.edu/accident).

## What Happens Next?

A health care provider will provide an evaluation, diagnostic testing (if necessary), and treatment (if necessary). Diagnostic testing may include testing the source of the exposure, with his or her consent, and baseline testing of the exposed person. Testing for HIV, HBV, and HCV is typically included, along with other blood tests or diagnostic examinations the health care provider recommends. If post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated, efficacy is time sensitive. The first dose should be given as soon as possible. Optimal time to start PEP is within hours of exposure, rather than days<sup>1</sup>.

**Will I need follow-up testing?** This direction will come from the health care provider. Follow-up will depend upon the testing outcome of the source person. It is important for your health that you understand and comply with the provider's follow-up testing and recommendations.

## Additional resources:

1. *How to Protect Yourself From Needle Stick Injuries (CDC)*:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2000-135/pdfs/2000-135.pdf>
2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-157/default.html>
3. General Guidance on OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (OSHA):  
[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodborne pathogens/gen\\_guidance.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodborne pathogens/gen_guidance.html)

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<sup>1</sup> Clinician Consultation Center – <http://nccc.ucsf.edu/clinical-resources/pep-resources/pep-quick-guide/>

## What Are Airborne Pathogens?

Airborne Pathogens are infectious microorganisms which can be transmitted through air and could cause disease. The discharged microbes may remain suspended in the air on dust particles, respiratory and water droplets.

Tuberculosis, or TB, is an airborne pathogen of concern. TB is spread through the air from one person to another. The bacteria are put into the air when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings. People nearby may breathe in these bacteria and become infected.

## What to Do When an Airborne Pathogens Exposure Occurs:

If you think you have been exposed to an airborne pathogen (i.e. tuberculosis) without appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), you should immediately contact your Ivy Tech instructor and clinical supervisor and seek testing at an urgent care clinic, emergency room, or physician office. Be prepared to tell the doctor or nurse when you were exposed to the airborne pathogen, what type of exposure you think occurred (contaminated air with or without respiratory tract droplets, mucus, or blood), and if the source patient of the contamination is being tested for airborne pathogens.

## Additional resources:

1. TB Elimination - *Infection Control in Health-Care Settings*:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/prevention/ichcs.pdf>
2. CDC Division of TB: <http://www.cdc.gov/tb>
3. Indiana TB Control Office:  
[Indiana Department of Health](http://www.in.gov/health)  
2 North Meridian Street, 6th Floor  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Tel: 317-233-7545  
Fax: 317-233-7747
4. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tb/>
5. OSHA: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/tuberculosis/index.html>
6. Respiratory Protection in Health-Care Settings (CDC) Fact Sheet:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/tb/publications/factsheets/prevention/rphcs.htm>