



El Monte Union High School District

Universal Precautions for Your Protection **Some Facts about Infectious Disease**

Wash your hands with liquid soap, not bar soap, and running water

- ~ before preparing food, before and after eating
- ~ after using the restroom
- ~ after contact with any body fluids (blood, saliva, feces, urine, semen, menstrual flow, wound drainage, nasal discharge, etc.)
- ~ after removing disposable gloves

Wear disposable gloves whenever you will be

- ~ touching any body fluids, particularly blood
- ~ examining the mouth or assisting with dental care
- ~ coming in physical contact with anyone who has open cuts, lesions, etc.
- ~ Do not reuse gloves, throw them away after each use.

Use care when disposing of trash.

- ~ Use trash containers lined with plastic bags when disposing refuse that contains blood/body fluids.
- ~ Put needles, syringes, or other sharp objects in special puncture proof containers. (Do not bend, break, or recap needles).
- ~ Tie plastic bag and discard each day.

Use a disinfectant.

- ~ Clean all areas soiled with blood and body fluids (table tops, toilets, sinks, desks, etc.) with a fresh solution of one part chlorine bleach to 10 parts water, or with a disinfectant approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

What is AIDS/HIV infection?

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the advanced stage of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection. The virus attacks the body's immune system, leaving it open to life-threatening infections and malignancies. The virus may also directly attack the central nervous system. Persons infected with HIV often have no apparent symptoms and usually appear to be in good health. More often than half of the persons in the U.S. who have been diagnosed with AIDS (the advanced stage of HIV) have died.

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by a virus present in blood and other body fluids of infected persons. Less than 50% of the people who become infected show symptoms. Like those of Hepatitis A, symptoms include fatigue, mild fever, muscle/joint aches, nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, and abdominal pain. In some patients, the urine turns dark and the skin becomes yellow. Symptoms may begin to appear up to six months after exposure to the virus. Death is not common in Hepatitis B, but 50% of those infected become long term carriers. Up to 25% of the carriers may develop serious chronic liver disease.

How can HIV and Hepatitis B be prevented?

There is no vaccine to prevent AIDS/HIV infection. There is a safe and effective vaccine to combat Hepatitis B. The cost of the vaccine may be covered by your employee health insurance benefits.

In the Classroom – The way you are most likely to be exposed to AIDS/HIV infection and Hepatitis B in the school setting is when your broken skin comes directly in contact with the blood of an infected person. The risk of transmitting Hepatitis B in classroom settings can be almost eliminated by good environmental and personal hygiene. Ask your doctor about receiving a protective vaccine.

Prevention in other settings – Sexual intercourse and sharing intravenous equipment are the behaviors that most often transmit the viruses that cause Hepatitis B and HIV infections. The major risk of exposure to Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases in general, can be virtually eliminated if (a) your sexual relationship is mutually monogamous and neither you nor your partner is infected, and (b) you refrain from sharing intravenous equipment. Proper use of condoms combined with water-based lubricants containing spermicide during sexual intercourse greatly reduces the risk of transmission of these diseases. Do not share any equipment that penetrates the skin.

How Do They Spread?

Both HIV and Hepatitis B can be spread in the following ways:

1. Any sexual activity involving direct contact with semen, blood, or vaginal secretion of any infected person.
2. Sharing intravenous (IV) needles and/or syringes with someone who is infected.
3. Penetrating the skin with non-sterile objects, such as those used for tattooing, ear piercing, etc.
4. Direct contact of infected blood with cuts, broken skin, or mucous membranes of the eye or mouth.
5. Receiving blood transfusions or blood products from someone who is infected (an HIV screening test has been in use since 1985 that has reduced the risk of AIDS to 1 in 68,000 in California).
6. Being born to an infected mother.

A person infected with HIV or Hepatitis B can transmit the infection even though they may not appear ill. Some people may carry the virus(es) for years without showing symptoms.

Universal Precautions Can Protect You

Taking universal precautions will result in fewer illnesses, in general, for you and the people around you. The most common infectious diseases found in schools are: common cold, flu, impetigo, pink eye, strep throat, and chicken pox. You will be less likely to come in contact with: Hepatitis B, HIV (the AIDS virus), or sexually transmitted diseases.

Medical Confidentiality

It is important that confidentiality of all medical information concerning students and co-workers be maintained, especially for those who have AIDS-HIV infection. **Sharing information about someone who has AIDS/HIV infection is prohibited by law and punishable by fine in California.**

At school and other public settings it is unlikely that you will know who is infected with the virus that causes AIDS/HIV, Hepatitis B, or many other diseases. Taking universal precautions can protect you and can prevent the spread of the diseases. You will not need to know who is infected or which disease they may be carrying if you always use Universal Precautions.