

## STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

### GENERAL INFORMATION:

Standard precautions are to protect health care workers on the job from infectious diseases that can be transmitted by blood, body fluids, and human tissue. These blood borne viruses include the viruses that can cause hepatitis and AIDS. These viruses are passed from person to person by blood and/or body fluids. They are:

1. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This is the virus which is the cause of AIDS.
2. Hepatitis B Virus (HBV). This virus causes hepatitis or liver disease.
3. Cylomegalovirus (CMV). This virus causes an infection that can lead to birth defects.
4. Other infectious diseases. Be aware that blood, body fluids, and human tissue can carry other infectious diseases as well.

Hepatitis B is a disease that affects about 8,000 healthcare workers each year, primarily through needle sticks, and causes death to approximately 200 health care workers each year. A vaccine to protect health care workers from Hepatitis B is available through Southern Highlands for employees free of cost. Hepatitis is passed from person to person by exposure to blood and body fluids.

HIV is passed from person to person by exposure to blood or body fluids. HIV has infected some health care workers, most through accidental sticks from contaminated needles. Others have become infected by blood being splashed in their eyes, nose or mouth. The risk of developing AIDS and dying is high if you get infected with HIV. Once infected with HIV, it can be passed along through sexual contact and a pregnant woman can pass it on to her unborn child. There is no vaccine to protect you from HIV at this time.

Cylomegalovirus (CMV) may be passed along from person to person by exposure to body fluids and the person who is infected may have no symptoms. The danger from the virus is its effect on an unborn child.

Often we do not know that a consumer has one of these diseases. Many times the consumer may not appear ill. You can protect yourself from exposure by following Standard Precautions and treating all contact with blood and body fluids as though it were infectious.

### WHAT IS EXPOSURE?

Exposure is the direct contact between certain parts of your body and the blood, body fluids, or tissue of another person. Examples of body fluids are urine, stool, wound drainage, saliva, and other secretions. Here is a list of examples of exposure.

1. Getting blood or body fluids directly on cuts or breaks in your skin.
2. Getting cut or stabbed by a needle or any sharp instrument that has been used on someone.
3. Getting blood or body fluid in your eyes, mouth, or nose.

## WHAT IS NOT EXPOSURE?

1. Handling food trays or furniture.
2. Using public bathrooms or telephones.
3. Personal contact with consumers such as shaking hands, giving information, touching intact skin.
4. Doing clerical duties for a consumer.

## JOB CATEGORIES AND RISKS:

All jobs can be divided into different groups according to the amount of risk involved while doing daily work. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that you know your level of risk. All Southern Highlands employees are required to observe Standard Precautions.

**CATEGORY 1** – Your job usually involves contact with consumers or consumer’s body fluids (changing diapers, working with drooling consumers, collecting specimens, working with aggressive or biting consumers, giving injections). If you are in this category, you need to get the Hepatitis B vaccine.

**CATEGORY 2** – Your job may expose you occasionally or in an emergency situation to blood, body fluids, or human tissue. If you are in this category, you need to get the Hepatitis B vaccine.

If your job puts you either category 1 or 2, you must use Standard Precautions and Southern Highlands strongly recommends that you receive the Hepatitis B vaccine.

**CATEGORY 3** – Your job does not involve exposure to blood, body fluids or human tissue. You do not perform or help in emergency medical care or first aid as part of your job.

Standard Precautions are designated to protect you, the health care worker, from the risk of infectious diseases that can be transmitted from exposure to blood, body fluids or human tissue. Using Standard Precautions is required. Failure to use Standard Precautions can result not only in disease, but in disciplinary action.

Any questions about Standard Precautions, the diseases they are designed to help prevent or infectious disease in general should be directed to the nurse at your work site.

## WHAT ARE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS?

1. You **MUST** wear gloves if you touch blood, body fluids, mucus membranes or tissue of anyone. To touch the skin of a consumer that is broken or cut, wear gloves!! Change gloves immediately if they become torn. change gloves after **EACH** consumer contact. Always wash your hands immediately after taking off gloves. Other items of personal protective equipment includes eye shields, goggles, masks, gowns, and is available in your size at all sites.

2. If your hands or other skin surfaces have direct contact with blood, body fluids, or tissue, you must immediately wash the area with soap for at least 10 seconds and rinse with running water. If your eyes, nose or mouth are splashed with blood or body fluids, you must flush them with large amounts of water. There are emergency eye wash stations at each site and eye wash bottles in all first aid kits. If you have blood or body fluid splashed into a skin cut, puncture or lesion, first wash the area with soap and water for at least 10 seconds then put 70% isopropyl alcohol on the area. **YOU MUST REPORT ANY EXPOSURE TO YOUR SUPERVISOR AND THE CENTER NURSE IMMEDIATELY.** See Exposure Control Plan for guidelines.
3. Do not eat, drink, apply cosmetics, lip balm, or handle contact lens in work areas where there is the potential for occupational exposure.
4. Wear water resistant gowns or aprons if soiling of clothing with blood or body fluids is anticipated.
5. You must wear a mask and eye protection or a face shield if spraying or splashing to your face is likely.
6. All personal protective equipment shall be removed immediately upon leaving the area and placed in a designated container for disposal.
7. CPR masks are available in all consumer areas to minimize the need for direct mouth to mouth resuscitation.
8. Handle anything sharp with tongs or a brush and dust pan to prevent accidental cuts. **DO NOT** recap, bend, or break used needles except in rare emergencies when nurses are permitted to use a one hand technique in which they have been trained. Discard needles immediately in a biohazard sharps container which is puncture resistant. Remove vacutainer needles only from a clean vacutainer holder using the needle removal device to do this. Do not remove needles from visible contaminated holders. Discard both if bloody.
9. Clean blood or body fluid spills promptly. To clean the spill, wear gloves and wash with a freshly made solution of 10% chlorine bleach in water or use a body fluid disposal kit which is available at all sites and on all vehicles for this purpose. Place paper towels over the spill. Flood the area with bleach solution. Leave on the area for 10 minutes. Discard the paper towels in a biohazard container. Clean the area again in usual manner with cleaning products.
10. All specimens may be infectious. Place them inside plastic bags or other appropriate leak proof containers before taking to the lab. Do not place food or drink in refrigerators, freezers, cabinets or other areas where any specimens are placed.
11. Report to the nurse at your location if you have a draining skin cut or sores. You must report before you take care of consumers or touch consumer care equipment.

12. Laundry visibly soiled with blood or body fluids must be handled with gloves. All such laundry must be placed in a fluid proof bag. All contaminated laundry must be washed separately. (See Laundry Procedure).
13. To get rid of blood or body fluids, carefully pour it in the commode. The drain connects to a sanitary sewer. Protect yourself from splashes.
14. **ALL MATERIALS OR ITEMS CONTAMINATED WITH BLOOD, BODY FLUIDS, OR HUMAN TISSUE MUST BE PUT IN A BIOHAZARD CONTAINER.**

I understand the information presented and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

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Signature	Job Title	Category	Date
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