

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions are a standard set of actions to be used whenever a person is likely to come in contact with the blood or other body fluid of another person. It is important to treat ALL contact with blood and other body fluids as if the material were infected because we don't know if someone might have an infection or disease that is contagious.

Protection includes:

- Wear disposable gloves when coming into contact with body fluids.
- Wear gloves while providing care if you have open cuts or chapped skin.
- Wash hands for at least 30 seconds after contact with blood/body fluid.

When cleaning blood/fluid soiled surfaces:

- Use disposable material like paper towels to clean surfaces.
- Discard soiled material in a sealed plastic bag, or double paper bags, and dispose in a covered garbage container.
- Immediately disinfect with a fresh solution of one part bleach and nine parts water.
- Machine wash laundry separately in hot, soapy water.

Handling Needles:

- Needles used to administer medications or treatments MUST be thrown away in a "sharps" container.
- A "sharps" container is a thick plastic container available at most medical supply stores.
- NEVER bend, break, remove, or recap any used needle.
- If a "sharps" container is not available, a covered glass container could be used.
- When filled, the "sharps" container must be dropped off at a designated site for medical waste products. Check with area pharmacies or your client's *Health & Wellness Coordinator (nurse)*.