

OSHA & INFECTION CONTROL

Instructions: Please read, complete and return post test.

OSHA & INFECTION CONTROL

(Occupational Safety & Health Administration)

I. General Information

Standard Precautions, formerly called Universal Precautions, is a method of infection control defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a Government agency. Under state and federal laws, health care workers are required to follow certain precautions when caring for people. Standard Precautions is defined as treating all blood, body fluids, not-intact skin, and mucous membranes as if they were infected with an infectious disease. Following Standard Precautions is the only safe way of performing your job. You cannot tell by looking at your clients or their charts if they are infected with a contagious (infectious) disease, such as HIV, hepatitis, or influenza.

From 1987 to 1995, federal and state laws required all health care workers to follow certain precautions or safety measures when caring for people. These rules were called Universal Precautions because they applied to all people being cared for, even if they were not suspected of having a disease.

In 1995, the CDC issued new guidelines, called Standard Precautions. The precautions are very much like Universal Precautions. Standard Precautions mean treating all blood, body fluids, non-intact skin (like abrasions, pimples, or open sores), and mucous membranes (opening of eyes, mouth, nose, rectum, or genitals) as if they were infected with an infectious disease.

Under Universal Precautions, some body fluids and mucous membranes were not included and some were. Standard Precautions is simpler to remember because it includes everything except sweat. It is also the best way to protect you from becoming infected with diseases, such as, HIV/Aids or hepatitis. Again, because you cannot tell if someone is infectious by looking at them or even by reading their charts, Standard Precautions is the only way to protect yourself. Under Standard Precautions, "body fluids" include saliva, sputum (fluid coughed up), urine, feces, semen, vaginal secretions, and pus or other wound drainage.

II. Tips for Preventing the Spread of Infection

Some diseases have become immune to the antibiotics we use. As a result, controlling diseases and preventing infections from spreading are more crucial than ever, and doing so begins with measures every individual can take. Here are some tips to remember:

- Wash your hands frequently--especially before preparing food, before eating, and after using the restroom.

II. Tips for Preventing the Spread of Infection (cont'd)

- Don't insist that your physician give antibiotics if you don't need them. Antibiotics have no effect on illnesses caused by viruses.
- Take prescribed antibiotics exactly as instructed. Do not stop taking them without checking with your physician, even if the medicine makes you feel better or worse.
- Keep your immunizations--and those of your children--up to date.

- Don't send your child to a day care center or to a school with symptoms of an infection--such as vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fever.
- Follow safe sexual practices.
- Do not use I.V. drugs; if you do, do not share needles.
- Don't share personal items--such as razor blades, tooth brushes, comb, and hairbrushes--don't eat or drink from others' plates or glasses.
- Keep kitchen surfaces clean, especially when preparing meat, chicken, and fish. Disinfect kitchen surfaces.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold; avoid leaving food out for an extended period.
- Remove gloves immediately when finished with procedure.
- Immediately wash all skin surfaces that have been contaminated with blood and body fluids. Flush skin with running water for one minute.
- Wear a disposal gown if you may come into contact with blood or body fluids (for example, emptying a urinary drainage bag). If your client has a contagious illness, you should wear a gown even if it is not likely you will come into contact with blood or body fluids.
- Wear a mask and protective glasses if the possibility exists that you will come into contact with splashing blood or body fluids (for example, emptying a bed pan)
- Wear gloves and use caution when handling razor blades, needles, and other sharp objects. Discard these objects carefully in a puncture-resistant, biohazard container.
- Avoid nicks and cuts when shaving clients.
- Carefully bag all contaminated supplies and dispose of them according to your agency's policy

III. Hand Washing

Hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent infection. Hands should be washed before and after patient contact. Wash hands during patient care as hands can become soiled. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after removing gloves. Wearing gloves does not eliminate the necessity for hand washing. If soap and water are

