



BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Talking Points:

If you see someone in distress, especially if that person is severely injured, bleeding, or ill, your first thought is to help them. No one is saying do not help, but you need to be aware of your own safety. You must be aware of the risk of contracting a harmful virus from another person's blood or other body fluids.

What we are talking about are viruses known as bloodborne pathogens. The three most common are: HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials can be transmitted when they come in contact with an individual's mucous membranes. In other words, the eyes, nose, mouth, or even broken skin from a cut, burn, or sore.

How to Keep Yourself Safe

- Universal Precautions: Treat all blood and body fluids as if they are known to contain a virus.
- Wear PPE – Protect yourself when giving first aid or cleaning up blood by using gloves, a face shield, etc.
- Dispose of sharps into their designated containers.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth during or after giving first aid.
- Dispose of contaminated items properly – Use a red biohazard bag tied shut and/or a biohazard container.
- Decontaminate surfaces once they have been used and/or soiled – this includes PPE (that is not disposable), equipment, work surfaces, and the floor.

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water immediately after providing care or handling hazardous materials.
- If you think you may have been exposed: wash the area with soap and water or flush the area if it was the mouth, nose, or eye. Report the situation to your supervisor or company appointed person and immediately seek medical care.

Questions to review knowledge:

1. What are universal precautions? _____

2. True or False – If I were potentially infected, I just need to ignore it until I start showing symptoms of a bloodborne pathogen.
3. How do you properly dispose of contaminated items? _____

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