

## **Guidelines For Handling Body Fluids In School (Universal Precautions)**

The following guidelines are meant to provide simple and effective precautions against the transmission of disease for all persons, including pregnant women, potentially exposed to the blood or body fluids of any person. No distinction is made between body fluids from individuals with a known disease or those from individuals without symptoms or with an undiagnosed disease.

### **Contact with body fluids**

The body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain potentially infectious agents (germs). The term “body fluids” includes: blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions (e.g., nasal discharge) and saliva. Contact with body fluids presents a risk of infection with a variety of germs. In general, however, the risks are very low and dependent on a variety of factors including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it.

Table 1 provides examples of particular germs that may occur in body fluids and the respective transmission concerns. It must be emphasized that the body fluids with which one may come in contact usually contain many organisms, some of which may cause disease. Furthermore, many germs may be carried by individuals who have no symptoms of illness. These individuals may be at various stages of infection: incubating disease, mildly infected without symptoms, or chronic carriers of certain infectious agents including the AIDS and hepatitis viruses. In fact, transmission of communicable diseases is more likely to occur from contact with infected body fluids of unrecognized carriers than from contact with fluids from recognized individuals because simple precautions are not always carried out.

TABLE 1  
TRANSMISSION CONCERNS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING  
BODY FLUID SOURCE OF INFECTIOUS AGENTS

Body Fluid Source	Organism of Concern	Transmission Concern
Blood Cuts/abrasions Nosebleeds Menses Contaminated needles	Hepatitis B,C & D Virus HIV/AIDS Cytomegalovirus	Bloodstream inoculation through cuts and abrasions on hands Direct blood stream inoculation
Feces* Incontinence	Salmonella bacteria Shingella bacteria Rotavirus Hepatitis A & E Virus	Oral inoculation from contaminated hands
Urine* Incontinence	Cytomegalovirus (CMV)	Bloodstream inoculation through cuts and abrasions on hands
Respiratory secretions Saliva Nasal discharge	Common cold virus Epstein-Barr virus CMV	Oral inoculation from contaminated hands or close salivary contact
Vomit* Incontinence	Gastrointestinal viruses (e.g. Norwalk agent Rotavirus)	Oral inoculation from contaminated hands
Semen/vaginal fluids	Hepatitis B virus HIV/AIDS STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases include Gonorrhea, Syphilis, etc.)	Sexual contact, intercourse

\*There are no reported cases of HIV/AIDS suspected of having been transmitted by these sources. Wear gloves when exposed to body secretions, especially blood, urine or feces. Treat all body fluids as having potential for infection.  
Avoiding contact with body fluids

When possible, direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided. Disposable gloves will be available in the health office of the nurse and in each teacher's desk or readily available. Gloves are recommended when direct hand contact with body fluids is anticipated (e.g., treating bloody noses, handling clothes soiled by incontinence, cleaning small spills by hand). If extensive contact is made with body fluids, hands should be washed afterwards. Gloves used for this purpose should be put in a plastic bag or lined trash can, secured and disposed of daily.

#### Procedure when direct skin contact occurs

In many instances, unanticipated skin contact with body fluids may occur in situations where gloves may not be immediately available (e.g., when wiping a runny nose, applying pressure to a bleeding injury outside the classroom, helping a child in the bathroom). In these instances, hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons should be routinely washed with soap and water after direct contact has ceased.

Clothing and other nondisposable items (e.g., towels used to wipe up body fluid) that are soaked through with body fluids should be placed in double bagged plastic bags. Clothing should be sent home for washing.

Contaminated disposable items (e.g. tissues, paper towels, diapers) should be handled with disposable gloves and double bagged in plastic for disposal.

#### Removal of spilled body fluids from the environment

Most schools have standard procedures already in place for removing body fluids (e.g., vomitus). These procedures should be reviewed to determine whether appropriate cleaning and disinfection steps have been included.

Many schools stock sanitary absorbent agents specifically intended for cleaning body fluid spills (e.g., ZGOOP, Parsen Mfg. Co., Philadelphia, PA). Disposable gloves should be worn when using these agents. The dry material is applied to the area, left for a few minutes to absorb the fluid, and then vacuumed or swept up. The vacuum bag or sweepings should be disposed of in a plastic bag. Broom and dustpan should be rinsed in a disinfectant. No special handling is required for vacuuming equipment.

### Handwashing procedure

Proper handwashing requires the use of soap and water and vigorous washing under a stream of running water for a minimum of 10 seconds.

Soap suspends easily removable soil and micro-organisms allowing them to be washed off. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris. Rinse under running water. Use paper towels to thoroughly dry hands and to turn off faucet.

### Disinfectants

An intermediate level disinfectant should be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids. Such disinfectant will kill vegetative bacteria, fungi, tubercle bacillus and viruses. The disinfectant should be registered by the Environmental Protection Agency for use as a disinfectant in medical facilities and hospitals.

Various classes of disinfectant are listed below. (Brand names are used only for examples of each type of germicidal solution and should not be considered an endorsement of a specific product).

1. Ethyl or isopropyl alcohol (70%).
2. Phenolic germicidal detergent in a 1% aqueous solution (e.g., Lysol).
3. Sodium Hypochlorite with at least 100 parts per million (ppm) available chlorine preferred for objects put on mouth ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup household bleach in one gallon water; (10:1 solution) needs to be freshly prepared each time it is used).
4. Quaternary ammonium germicidal detergent in 2% aqueous solution (e.g., Tri-quat, Mytar or Sage).
5. Iodophor germicidal detergent with 500 parts per million (ppm) available iodine (e.g., Wescodyne).

### Disinfection of hard surfaces and care of equipment

Gloves should be worn to remove soil and to apply disinfectant. After removing the soil, a disinfectant is applied. Mops should be soaked in the disinfectant after use and rinsed thoroughly or washed in a hot water cycle before rinse. Disposable cleaning equipment and

water should be placed in a toilet or plastic bag as appropriate. Nondisposable cleaning equipment (dust pans, buckets) should be thoroughly rinsed in the disinfectant. The disinfectant solution should be promptly disposed down a drainpipe. Remove gloves and discard in appropriate receptacles.

Disinfection of rugs

Apply sanitary absorbent agent, let dry and vacuum. If necessary, mechanically remove with dust pan and broom, then apply rug shampoo (a germicidal detergent) with a brush and vacuum. Rinse dust pan and broom in disinfectant. If necessary, wash brush with soap and water. Dispose of nonreusable cleaning equipment as noted above.

Clothing soiled with body fluids

Clothing should not be laundered at school. Double bag and send home with student.

Approved: Date of policy revision

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