

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Background

The District has a responsibility to protect, where possible, students and employees from the danger of exposure to communicable diseases. This responsibility includes the authority to restrict the attendance of a student or suspend an employee when necessary, on the advice of the School Medical Officer.

Procedures

1. In recent years increased attention has been paid to the potential of contracting infectious diseases from contact with body fluids. While the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV--the cause of AIDS) has been the main concern, body fluids (i.e. blood, feces, vomitus, semen, mucous) have always had the potential to transmit many diseases; therefore, it is appropriate that proper hygienic procedures be practised in cleaning spills of these fluids. The procedures are described in general as Universal Precautions and are described as follows:
 - 1.1. “Universal precautions” are steps we are to take to protect ourselves when we come into contact with the blood or body fluids of other people. Universal precautions are intended to stop the spread of germs to others.
 - 1.1.1. Most of the time, you can’t tell if a person is infected with AIDS, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or any number of other diseases. The best thing to do is treat the blood and body fluids of every person as potentially infectious. These potentially infectious body fluids include blood, semen, and vaginal secretions.
 - 1.1.2. The basics of universal precautions
 - 1.1.2.1. Blood and body fluids – always treat as potentially infectious. Clean up spills promptly using absorbent material first, then clean more thoroughly with a disinfectant, like household bleach.
 - 1.1.2.2. Gloves – wear latex, vinyl or rubber disposable gloves when handling blood, body fluids, or when cleaning cuts, scrapes or wounds. Wash hands after removing gloves, and dispose of the gloves in a plastic bag. Add gloves to your first aid kit so they are always ready. They are not expensive, and can be bought at any drugstore.
 - 1.1.2.3. Needlestick injuries – go to the nearest Health Unit or hospital emergency department immediately for treatment assessment.
 - 1.1.2.4. Sharp objects – place needles and syringes in a safe container. never re-cap, bend or break off used needles! Place them in a puncture-proof metal or plastic container with a lid, such as an empty coffee tin and then place in the garbage.
 - 1.1.2.5. Personal articles – never share toothbrushes or razors. They can transmit small amounts of blood from one user to the next. Dispose of razors carefully. Wrap sanitary napkins before disposing. Handle bloody bedding or clothing cautiously, and wash in hot soapy water.

- 1.1.2.6. Hand-washing is the best single way to prevent the spread of germs from one person to another. Wash hand thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- 1.1.2.6.1. Always wash hands:
- before preparing food
 - before mealtimes
 - before breastfeeding, and
 - after toileting or diapering
 - before and after providing first aid
 - after handling blood or body fluids.
- 1.1.2.7. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze, then wash your hands. Don't pass your germs on to others.
- 1.1.2.8. Teach others - particularly children about healthy behaviour and potential risks and how to deal with them safely.
- 1.1.2.9. How can you keep yourself safe?
- 1.1.2.9.1. Blood splashed on your skin may cause infection by getting into cuts, nicks, or raw chapped areas. Protect yourself by wearing gloves if you are going to be exposed to blood or other body fluids. For example, if you help someone who has a bleeding nose you should wear vinyl or latex disposable gloves to protect your skin. If this is not possible, continue to help the person and then wash immediately afterwards.
- 1.1.2.9.2. Gloves are not necessarily required if you come into contact with urine, feces, nasal secretions, saliva or vomit, unless you can see blood in it. However, in some situations you may prefer to wear gloves. Remember, it is always important to wash your hands carefully after touching any body fluids, even if you have worn gloves.
- 1.1.2.10. How can you safely clean up spills of blood or other body fluids?
- 1.1.2.10.1. Protect yourself by wearing disposable vinyl or latex or rubber gloves. If there is a risk of splashing use protective eye wear.
- 1.1.2.10.2. Use disposable absorbent material such as paper towels to remove most of the spill. Place these in a plastic bag and deposit in the garbage.
- 1.1.2.10.3. Wipe the floor, or any contaminated surfaces with a disinfectant solution. This can be easily made by mixing one part household bleach to ten parts of water. This type of bleach solution is to be freshly made up or it may lose its strength. For carpets or upholstery that may be damaged by bleach, other household germicides or disinfectant agents can be used. Soak mops or brushes that have been used for cleaning in a disinfectant for 20 minutes.

1.1.2.10.4. When you are finished wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.

1.1.2.11. What should you do if you find a used syringe or condom?

1.1.2.11.1. A needle that someone else has used contains a small amount of their blood which may carry the AIDS or Hepatitis B virus. Used condoms can also contain infectious body fluids.

1.1.2.11.2. Teach children never to touch needles, syringes or condoms, and to tell an adult about them immediately.

1.1.2.11.3. If you find a used syringe or condom - especially in a park, school or playground - it is important to dispose of them promptly and carefully.

1.1.2.11.3.1. Use a pair of tongs or pliers, or a pair of sturdy gloves to pick up these items.

1.1.2.11.3.2. Discard condoms in a plastic bag.

1.1.2.11.3.3. Discard syringes or needles in a puncture-proof container, preferably one intended for such purposes. Any plastic or metal container with a lid, such as a coffee can, will also do.

1.1.2.11.3.4. When you have finished wash your hands carefully with soap and water.

1.1.2.11.4. While the risk of infection from used condoms and syringes is very low, it is best to limit this risk as much as possible. It is important to help children understand how important these necessary precautions are.

1.1.2.12. What should you do if you accidentally prick yourself with a dirty needle?

1.1.2.12.1. If possible, put the pricked area low to the ground to promote bleeding.

1.1.2.12.2. Wash the area well with soap and water.

1.1.2.12.3. Go to your nearest local health unit or hospital Emergency Department immediately for treatment assessment.

1.1.2.13. Remember - All Blood and Body Fluids are Potentially Infectious.

2. Employees who have the AIDS Virus (HIV Infection)

2.1. Under normal circumstances teachers and other staff who have an HIV infection pose no risk to other staff or students.

2.2. No action needs to be taken unless the individual is attempting to continue work despite being obviously ill.

2.3. In the circumstances that the Medical Health Officer is aware of an employee that has AIDS or is an AIDS carrier, school officials will not normally be informed unless there is a danger to the health of other students or staff.

- 2.4. In the circumstances where a school or District official becomes aware that an employee has HIV infection, information must be kept confidential to only those who truly need to know.
 - 2.5. An employee who has HIV infection is not to be removed from employment unless the attending physician and Medical Health Officer advise otherwise.
 - 2.6. Situations may arise where it is not known that an employee has HIV infection, but the symptoms become sufficient to make attendance at work difficult. In such cases the normal procedures for dealing with sick leave can be used.
3. Students Who Have the AIDS Virus (HIV Infection)
- 3.1. Personnel involved in the case and education of HIV-infected students shall respect the child's right to privacy, including maintaining confidential records. The number of personnel who are aware of the child's condition shall be kept at the minimum needed to assure proper care of the child.
 - 3.2. The Principal, who is ultimately responsible for student placement, will consult regularly with the Superintendent and the Medical Health Officer regarding the placement of known HIV-infected individuals.
 - 3.3. Decisions regarding the type of educational setting for HIV-infected children is to be based on the behaviours, neurologic development, and physical condition of the child and the expected type of interaction with others in that setting. In each case risks and benefits to both the infected child and to others in the setting are to be weighed. These decisions are best made using the team approach, including the child's physician, public health personnel, the child's parent, and school and District personnel. The Superintendent, in cooperation with the Medical Health Officer, will call such meetings as required.
 - 3.4. For most infected children, the benefits of an unrestricted setting would outweigh the risks of their acquiring potentially harmful infections in the setting and extremely low risk of transmission of HIV at school. Mandatory screening as a condition for school entry is not warranted.
 - 3.5. For very young children, for some neurologically handicapped children who lack control of their body secretions or who display behaviours such as biting, and for those children who have uncoverable oozing lesions, a more restricted environment is advisable. Children infected with HIV are to be educated in settings that minimize as far as practical exposure of other children to blood or body fluids. If necessary, when there is no appropriate school setting, and upon the advice of the Medical Health Officer, educational services can be provided through the District hospital or homebound program.
 - 3.6. District personnel providing personal care to an HIV-infected child shall at all times be guided by the advice and recommendations of the Medical Health Officer, who shall arrange for periodic inspection of such situations.
4. Hepatitis B Vaccination for Staff
- 4.1. While District staff have not generally been found to be at increased risk of Hepatitis B, there are some staff who may be at increased risk due to frequent exposures to blood or body fluids. The District will provide Hepatitis B vaccination for these employees at no cost upon completion of the proper authorization form available from the District Health and Safety Officer. Employees who are eligible for Hepatitis B vaccine include:
 - 4.1.1. Those who are expected to attend to bleeding students and staff (i.e. first aid responders);

- 4.1.2. Those who are providing regular personal care to students known to be Hepatitis B infected; and
- 4.1.3. Those who provide regular care to students whose usual behaviour involves biting or scratching or students who have poor control of bodily secretions.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 85, 89, 90, 91 School Act
Health Act
Safety Standards Act
Workers' Compensation Act
Communicable Diseases Regulation
Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
A Quick Guide to Common Childhood Diseases

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