



STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

KEY POINTS

Know how infections spread

Use Standard Precautions to prevent contact with bodily fluids

INTRODUCTION

All blood and body fluids are potentially infectious and it is not always known whether a patient has a disease that can be transmitted via blood (WHO 2003). Body fluids which contain large numbers of micro-organisms are a major source of pathogens. Therefore, Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions, as well as protecting Health Care Workers from infection and blood borne viruses, could prevent transmission of many other pathogens, and make a contribution to the reduction of Hospital Acquired Infection.

Because any patient may carry organisms that could potentially cause infection, hands must always be decontaminated appropriately (See Hand Hygiene Policy) and personal protective equipment used. If universal precautions are effectively practised patients and carers will be protected from infection transmission, whatever procedure is being undertaken and whatever the diagnosis of the patient (Kingston 1999).

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Prevent blood/body substance contact with non-intact skin and mucous membranes
- Minimise blood/body substance contact with intact skin
- Prevent sharps injuries
- Immunise staff against hepatitis B virus (see policies for Occupational Health Policies and Sharps Injuries)
- Prevent contaminated items being used between patients (see policy for Disinfection)

All precautions should be allied to good skin care and safe Infection Control practices at all times in order to protect both staff and patients

Issued by Infection Control Services Ltd. For more policies and information visit: www.infectioncontrolservices.co.uk		Publication Date: April 2007	Page 1 of 2
		Review Date: April 2009	
<p>Legal disclaimer. Care has been taken to confirm the accuracy of the information presented and to describe generally accepted practices. However, the author, is not responsible for errors or omissions in these Guidelines and make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the contents of the publication. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any loss or damage arising from applying, following or using any interpretation of information contained in this document.</p>			



UK HEALTH DEPARTMENTS 1998 GUIDELINES:

- Cover any cuts and grazes with an impermeable dressing
- Wash hands or use an alcohol hand rub before and after contact with each patient, and before putting on and removing gloves
- Change gloves between patients
- Assess risk of accidental contamination with blood and body fluids
- Wear appropriate protective clothing where contact with blood can be anticipated (see Uniform Policy)
- Avoid contamination of clothing and skin with blood
- Avoid sharps injuries
- Clear up spillages (however small) properly (see policy for Spillages)
- Follow safe procedures for the disposal of contaminated waste (see policy for Disposal of Spoiled Linen, Waste and Sharps)

REFERENCES


Chalmers C, Straub M. Standard principles for preventing and controlling infection. Nurs Stand 2006 Feb 15-21;20(23):57-65; quiz 66.

Pratt R, Pellowe C, Loveday HP et al. The EPIC Project: Developing National evidence-based guidelines for preventing healthcare associated infections. Journal of Hospital Infection. 2001. 47 (suppl) 53-54.

Royal College of Nursing. Good practice in infection prevention and control – guidance for nursing staff. Available at www.rcn.org.uk/resources/mrsa/downloads/Wipe_it_out-Good_practice_in_infection_prevention_and_control.pdf

Wilson J. Infection Control in Clinical Practice. 1993. London. Bailliere Tindall.

Ayliffe GA, Lowbury EJ, Geddes AM, Williams JD. Control of hospital infection – a practical handbook. 3rd Edition. 1992. Chapman and Hall Medical.

Issued by Infection Control Services Ltd. For more policies and information visit: www.infectioncontrolservices.co.uk	Publication Date: April 2007 Review Date: April 2009	Page 2 of 2
     	    	
<p>Legal disclaimer. Care has been taken to confirm the accuracy of the information presented and to describe generally accepted practices. However, the author, is not responsible for errors or omissions in these Guidelines and make no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the contents of the publication. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any loss or damage arising from applying, following or using any interpretation of information contained in this document.</p>		