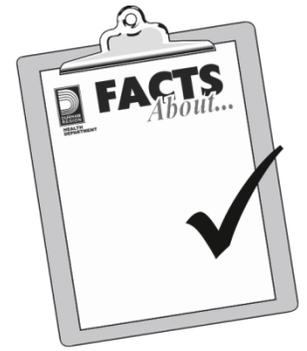




FACTS *About...*



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Exposure To Blood And Body Fluids

What is it?

Body fluids including blood, semen, vaginal fluid, cerebral spinal fluid, body tissues and organs can spread infectious diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). Saliva does not contain HIV or hepatitis C but may contain small amounts of hepatitis B. Breast milk can contain HIV. Urine, feces, vomit, and tears do not carry these infections. However, any of the body fluids listed can carry hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV if blood is present.

How is it spread?

If a person has an infectious disease, it can be spread:

- when needles are shared, or you have a needle stick injury
- when blood or body fluid come in contact with cuts or breaks in the skin (healthy skin will not spread infections and acts as a barrier to the infection)
- when infected fluids get in your eyes, nose or mouth
- during sexual activity where body fluids are shared

What do I do if I am exposed?

The best action to take is to go to an emergency department as soon as possible after your exposure. You will receive first aid if needed and be assessed for risk of exposure to an infection. You may receive some blood tests to help determine if you need any special treatment. If you are an emergency service worker, you should also follow up with your Designated Officer.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-668-2020 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How is it treated?

Hepatitis B vaccination and/or immune globulin may be an option to give your body immunity and prevent infection. If you have been vaccinated for hepatitis B in the past you may already be protected. A blood test can show if you are immune. There are medications that help to prevent the HIV virus from infecting you. The medication has a risk of side effects and is meant to be taken after high risk exposures. If recommended by a physician, the treatment should start **as soon as possible** after an exposure – within 72 hours. There is new treatment that can cure hepatitis C in most people. Follow up with a health care provider as soon as possible if you know you have been exposed.

How can I protect myself?

- Hepatitis B is best prevented by vaccination.
- Follow up with routine prenatal screening for each pregnancy so that newborns can receive appropriate vaccination if required.
- Always practice safer sex, including using condoms.
- Never share needles and avoid sharing personal items such as razors and toothbrushes.
- Carefully investigate personal body services (e.g., tattooing, body piercing, nail services) to make sure they meet infection control recommendations (e.g. Know Before You Go Durham).
- Use protective equipment to prevent contact with other people's blood and body fluids (e.g., gloves, eyewear).
- All blood spills (including if already dried) should be cleaned and disinfected with a mixture of bleach and water (one part household bleach to 10 parts water). Gloves should always be used when cleaning up any blood spills.
- If you are a health care worker or an emergency service worker, risk assessment followed by the implementation of routine practices to reduce or remove risk should be used in your daily practice.

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