

Blood-borne Diseases

What are blood-borne diseases?

- Diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are spread by exposure to infected blood or body fluids, such as semen, vaginal secretions and in some cases, saliva

You do not have to see blood or body fluids on instruments for an infection to occur.

Facts on blood-borne diseases:

- The hepatitis B virus can survive on surfaces such as metal, cotton, glass, etc. for 1-2 weeks.
- An individual infected with hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV may **not** show symptoms of illness right away, but are still infectious!
- There **is** a vaccine that will protect you from getting hepatitis B.
- There are **no** vaccines to protect you from getting hepatitis C or HIV.
- Hepatitis B and hepatitis C affect the liver, while HIV affects the body's immune system.
- Hepatitis B is more infectious than HIV.

How are blood-borne diseases transmitted?

- Using dirty instruments or equipment carrying infected blood or body fluids from one person to another
- Improper cleaning and disinfection or sterilization of instruments/equipment after each client
- Reusing single-use items, such as needles or blades, which can't be properly cleaned and sterilized
- Worker pokes him/herself with a used needle or sharp instrument

Protect yourself and your clients...

- Thoroughly wash hands before and after each client (using liquid soap and warm water).
- For invasive procedures, single-use, disposable gloves must be worn for each client and discarded after each client. Wash hands before and after using gloves.
- Single-use, disposable, sterile needles and blades must be used and properly discarded.
- Clean and then disinfect items that come into contact with blood or body fluids using an intermediate or high level disinfectant as soon as possible (sterilization is preferable).
- Items that penetrate the skin or which hold sterile items must be cleaned and sterilized after each client.
- Get vaccinated against the hepatitis B virus. Ask your Doctor for more information about the hepatitis B vaccine.



Health
Department

Environmental Help Line
905-723-3818 or 1-888-777-9613
durham.ca

Information available in accessible formats.

