

**ADvantage Program**  
**Consumer-Directed Personal Services and Supports**  
**(CD-PASS) Personal Services Assistant (PSA)**

**Acknowledgement of Understanding and**  
**Practice of Universal Precautions**

## **Introduction**

When you work in healthcare it is important to take precautions to prevent the spread of infection and disease. You need to protect yourself and the people you work for. Many diseases can be passed from one person to another, some more easily than others. One risk that healthcare workers face is exposure to blood borne pathogens. Three common blood borne pathogens are the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV). A vaccine is available to provide immunity against Hepatitis B. There is no approved vaccine for HIV or Hepatitis C.

A federal regulation, OSHA's Blood Borne Pathogens Standard, is designed to minimize your risk of exposure to these diseases. Perhaps its most important requirement is what's known as "*Universal Precautions*." These precautions are designed to prevent transmission of blood borne pathogens. It means treating all human blood and other potentially infectious body fluids as if they are definitely infected with blood borne pathogens. **Though the risk of infection is small**, universal precautions help protect you from even that minimal chance.

## **Universal Precautions**

### **Use Universal Precautions with Body Fluids that Could Contain Blood Borne Pathogens**

These Include:

- Blood (Wet or Dry)
- Semen or Vaginal Secretions
- Any body fluid visibly containing blood (such as saliva from bleeding gums)
- Any body fluid you can't distinguish from other body fluids

Additional body fluids (generally inside the body) that apply are: Cerebrospinal, Pleural, Peritoneal, Pericardial and Amniotic fluid. For example Pleural fluid is found in the lining of the lungs.

**Universal Precautions do not apply to the following unless they contain visible blood:**

- Feces
- Nasal Secretions
- Sputum
- Sweat
- Tears
- Urine
- Vomit
- Saliva

These substances do not carry the threat of blood borne pathogens unless they contain blood. However some of them do contain microorganisms that can cause other types of infection.

## **Always Follow Universal Precautions in Jobs and Tasks with a Risk of Exposure.**

These may include:

- Transporting or handling blood and any contaminated or possibly contaminated materials including sharp objects, trash, laundry, etc.
- Cleaning areas that are or could be contaminated
- Working in an area or at a task where it's unclear if there's a risk of exposure to blood borne pathogens
- Contact with non-intact skin or body tissue.

## **What does it mean to “Use” Universal Precautions?**

It is a prevention strategy in which all blood and potentially infectious materials are treated as if they are infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual. In other words, whether or not you think the blood/body fluid is infected with blood borne pathogens, you treat it as if it is. This approach is used in all situations where exposure to blood or potentially infectious materials is possible. This means that you should follow the guidelines in situations where exposure may occur.

Probably the first thing to do in any situation where you may be exposed to a blood borne pathogen is to ensure you are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). For example, you may have noticed that emergency medical personnel, doctors, nurses, dentists, dental assistants, and other health care professionals wear protective gloves. This is a simple precaution they take in order to prevent blood or potentially infectious body fluids from coming in contact with their skin. To protect yourself, it is essential to have a barrier between you and the potentially infectious material.

## **Examples of Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as a Barrier against Infection. Include:**

- Wearing gloves when you touch or handle potentially contaminated items or surfaces.
- Bandaging your cuts or broken skin

### **Additional examples most often seen in a hospital setting are:**

- Using masks and eye or face protection with solid side shields to protect mouth, eyes, nose, and face from splashes, sprays, or spatters
- Wearing gowns, aprons, lab coats, and surgical caps when necessary to protect your body from splashes, sprays, and spatters
- Using shoe covers or boots if there's a risk of exposure to large amounts of blood or body fluids or possibly contaminated broken glass

Wear disposable gloves only once and replace them immediately if they're torn or contaminated. Remove all PPE when it's contaminated and before you go into a clean area or touch clean items. Remove contaminated PPE so it doesn't touch your skin.

**Other important measures to reduce or prevent exposure to blood borne pathogens are: Practicing Good Hygiene and Eliminating Possible Situations for Exposure.**

Examples of these include:

- **Hand washing** – this is one of the most important practices used to prevent the spread of infection!
- Wash with soap and water as soon as possible after removing PPE, contacting potentially infectious materials, or completing a Consumer procedure
- Flush eyes, nose, and mouth with water after body fluid contact
- Don't eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or lip balm, or handle contact lenses where there's a risk of blood borne pathogens exposure
- Don't store food or drink in such areas
- Keep the workplace clean

**Understanding Your Risk**

The principal risk to the healthcare provider is in relation to a skin penetrating injury with a sharp object (such as a needle, lancet or broken glass) that has been previously contaminated with infected blood or other qualifying body fluid/material. Another is the splashing of infected fluid onto broken skin (such as a cut on your hand) or the splashing onto mucosa (such as the inside of your mouth, nose or in the eyes). These situations do not mean infection will definitely occur. They only identify the scenarios of greatest risk where infection might occur. It's impossible to know if someone is infected with a blood borne pathogen just by looking at them, so it's important to treat all the body fluids that can carry blood borne pathogens as if they are infected.

**What to do if you are exposed?**

If you are stuck by a used needle or other sharp object or get blood or other potentially infectious fluid in your eyes, nose, mouth or on broken skin:

1. Immediately flood the exposed area with water and clean any wound with soap and water or a skin disinfectant if available.
2. Then report the incident to your employer.

**Points to Remember:**

- Universal Precautions provide protection against Blood Borne Pathogens.
- To protect yourself, it is essential to have a barrier between you and the potentially infectious material.
- A vaccine is available for Hepatitis B.
- Handwashing is one of the most important means of controlling the spread of infection.

***Acknowledgement of Understanding***

As a Personal Services Assistant who will provide personal care services to a consumer, I have read this document concerning the Practice of Universal Precautions. I understand its contents and agree to use Universal Precautions when I perform my job duties and to report any violations to the appropriate authorities.

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Signature of Personal Services Assistant

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Date