

Be careful with blood!

Employer Guide

The guide contains information on

- hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection,
- safe work practices to prevent accidents involving blood, and
- emergency measures in case of an accident involving blood.



Hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection are diseases that can be transmitted when there is an accident involving the blood of someone who is infected.

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Hepatitis B and C

What is hepatitis?

It's a liver infection caused by a virus.
The liver helps digest food and clean the blood.

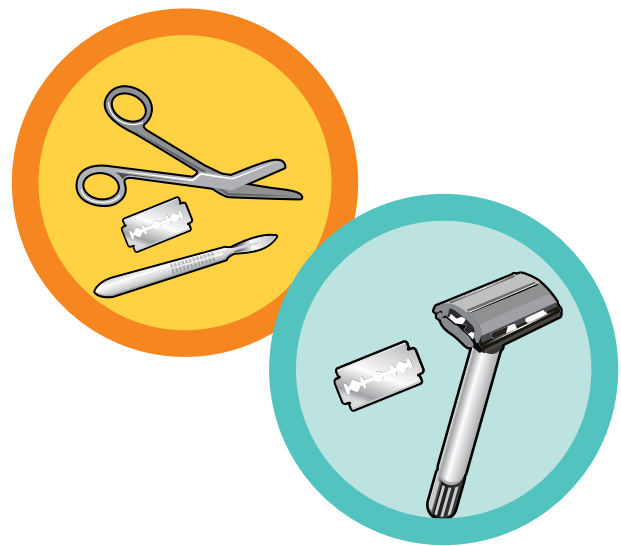
What are the symptoms?

- Fatigue
- Muscle pain
- Stomach ache
- Yellow eyes and skin (jaundice)
- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite

**1 in 2 people
has no
symptoms.**



After several years, people who are still infected with hepatitis B or C virus can develop complications: chronic hepatitis, cirrhosis and liver cancer.



HIV infection

What is HIV infection?

It's an infection caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). The virus attacks and destroys the system that protects the body against infections. If not properly treated, HIV can cause AIDS, which can be deadly. AIDS is now very rare in Canada because of the treatments that people who have HIV take.

What are the symptoms?

At first, there are very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all. The following symptoms can appear later:

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Sore throat
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Skin problems

There is no cure for HIV. People who have the infection remain carriers of the virus and could spread the infection. There are often no visible signs that a person is infected with hepatitis or HIV; sometimes the person doesn't even know it. Without treatment, the disease evolves and infections and cancers appear. So everyone's blood should be considered as potentially infected, including the blood of coworkers.

What are the risks of infection when there is an accident involving blood?

In case of an accident involving blood, the risk of getting infected is low. Contact between blood and healthy skin is not a risk.

For the infection to spread, the blood of an infected person must come into contact with another person's blood, by way of an opening on the skin.

There is a risk when

- germs enter the skin following
 - a jab, cut or scratch with an object soiled with blood,
 - a bite that breaks the skin,
 - contact with open skin lesions (e.g. eczema, wound, chapped skin);
- germs come into contact with the eyes, lips and inside of the mouth or nose, especially as a result of splashes.

Prevent

the risks of infection
through blood
at work



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1 USE SAFE WORK PRACTICES to reduce the risks of accident and prevent infection transmission

INFORM workers about

- risks of infection through blood,
- safe work practices to avoid contact with blood.

WASH hands thoroughly

- each time there is contact with blood or with objects and surfaces soiled with blood,
- after removing gloves, which could be punctured or torn.

WEAR disposable gloves when

- cleaning blood spots on surfaces,
- handling clothes or items soiled with blood,
- helping someone who is injured.

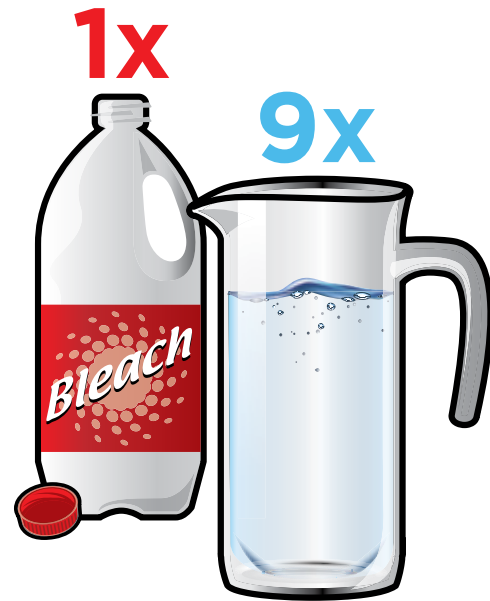
WEAR thick gloves when

- handling garbage.

USE gloves, tongs and safe containers when

- picking up used syringes and needles.



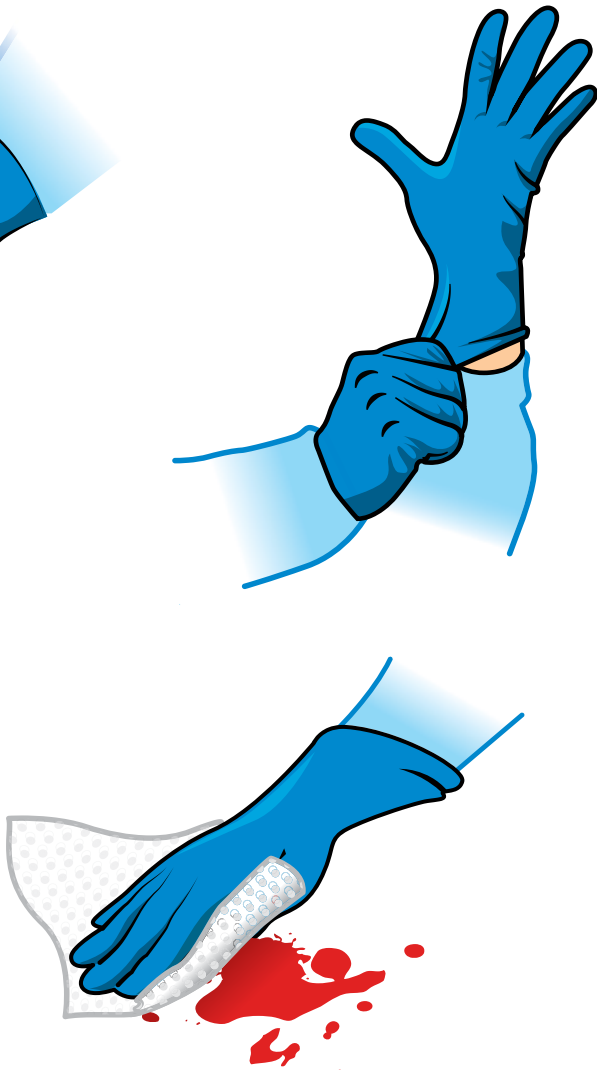


USE approved techniques when cleaning blood spots and blood on surfaces and objects:

- Wear disposable gloves.
- Wipe up blood spots with a paper towel.
- Use a mixture of water and 5.25% household bleach (1 part bleach with 9 parts water) and let it sit for 10 minutes.
- Rinse with water.
- Let dry.

ORGANIZE first aid

- Make sure there are first-aid attendants during each work shift.
- Have a regulation first-aid kit on hand: disposable nitrile glove and CPR mask.
- Post the procedures to follow in case of an accident involving blood.
- Record, in the workplace accident register, all accidents, incidents and first aid delivered.





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2 Act quickly – USE EMERGENCY MEASURES WHEN AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS

1. GIVE FIRST AID

After a cut, jab or scratch caused by an object soiled with blood

OR

After a bite that breaks the skin

OR

After blood has come into contact with open skin lesions (cut, eczema, wound, chapped skin),

- wash the wound immediately using soap and water.
- don't use a brush or products that can irritate the skin.
- rinse with water.

If blood has gotten on the lips, in the mouth and nose, or in the eyes

- thoroughly rinse the affected area with water as soon as possible.

2. NOTIFY THE PERSON IN CHARGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Note down the circumstances of the accident

- the object involved
- the amount of blood
- the depth of the injury
- the name and telephone number of the person who caused the accident, if applicable

3. REFER THE WORKER TO AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR CONSULTATION AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

(Ideally within 2 hours of the accident)

In Montréal, there is a referral centre at the CHUM specializing in this type of accident.

The worker can go there any time:

**CHUM EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT
1001 Sanguinet (south of René-Lévesque boulevard east)**





Date et heure de l'accident ou de l'incident			Lieu de l'accident ou de l'incident et métier ou fonction de la personne secourue	Description de causes de l'accident ou de l'incident	Blessure ou malaise	Premiers et Traitements
J	M	A	Heure		Personne responsable	
Mesures correctrices						
J	M	A	Heure		Personne responsable	
Mesures correctrices						
J	M	A	Heure		Personne responsable	
Mesures correctrices						

4. WHEN THE WORKER ARRIVES AT THE HOSPITAL, HE MUST TELL THE RECEPTIONIST THAT THIS IS AN ACCIDENT INVOLVING BLOOD

Upon returning to work, the employer must

- record the workplace accident in the first aid register,
- report the accident to CNESST by sending two forms: “Worker’s claim” and “Attestation médicale” (medical certificate),
- analyze and investigate the accident,
- propose measures to correct the situation that caused the accident.

3 VACCINATE

The hepatitis B vaccine is safe and about 90% effective. Vaccination to prevent hepatitis B is recommended in some workplaces because the risk of accident involving blood is high (e.g. nurses, police officers, firefighters and ambulance technicians).

In case of accident, the worker must see a doctor quickly. The worker will be given hepatitis B vaccine and possibly antibodies, which will provide effective protection.

At this time, there is no vaccine against hepatitis C or HIV. Following an accident involving blood, the worker can take medications to prevent HIV transmission. However, currently there is no medication to prevent transmission of hepatitis C virus.

A person can catch hepatitis or HIV infection through contact with blood. It’s important to act quickly! There are treatments for those types of accidents.

This guide is for all employers who supervise workers, first-aid attendants or volunteers who could be exposed to biohazards and are at risk of infections linked to blood or blood-stained fluids.

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