

Hep C factsheets

First aid



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Introduction

The risks of bloodborne illnesses being transmitted through blood to blood contact are well documented. Being blood aware doesn't mean having to be fanatical about avoiding contact with other people's blood or other body fluids. It simply means adopting reasonable steps that reduce the overall chance of catching diseases. This blood awareness applies when dealing with blood or other body fluid accidents - whether people involved are known to have hep C or not.

Precautions before first aid

- Wash hands using soap and warm water (warm water helps break down skin surface oils which can trap contaminants more easily).
- Cover any cuts or abrasions on your own skin using sterile dressing (eg. bandaid)
- Put on disposable latex or rubber gloves.

Precautions after first aid

- Wash hands immediately using soap & warm water, regardless of whether disposable gloves have been worn.
- Mop up and wash blood or other body fluid splashed surfaces with detergent and water (ideally, disposable gloves should be worn for cleaning and waste handling).
- Discard materials used to wipe up blood or other body fluids in a plastic bag.
- Remove clothing splashed with blood or other body fluids and wash as normal.
- Give hands a final wash using soap & water, regardless of whether disposable gloves have been worn.

Principles for infection control

- Your skin is your first line of defence. Make sure you have no uncovered cuts, abrasions or dermatitis.
- Wear disposable rubber gloves when dealing with any blood or other body fluids - and within the steps below.
- Disposable materials (eg. paper towel) should be used when cleaning up blood or other body fluid spills or splashes.
- Any surfaces which have had blood or other body fluid splashes should be cleaned with detergent and water.

If contact with blood or other body fluids does occur:

- Wash the blood or other body fluid away as soon as possible, preferably with soap and water.
- Rinse away any blood or other body fluids from the eyes, nose and mouth with plenty of water.
- Injuries such as cuts and needlesticks should be washed with normal saline or soapy water, encouraged to bleed and then covered using a sterile dressing (eg. adhesive plaster).
- In the workplace, any accidental exposure should be reported accordingly as per the relevant workplace policy.

Also see

Safe disposal of fits (factsheet)

- This factsheet was developed by the Hepatitis C Council of NSW.