

2021 OVERVIEW SERIES: BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS FACT SHEET

LENGTH: 10 MINUTES

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:

Bloodborne pathogens are contaminants found in human blood or other bodily fluids that can transmit diseases such as hepatitis, HIV, various hemorrhagic fevers and other illnesses. Bloodborne pathogens can enter your body through contact with an open wound or cut, through needlesticks or other contaminated sharp objects, or through sexual contact. They can also be inhaled or ingested. In order to prevent the spread of diseases caused by contaminated blood or bodily fluids, your organization has developed an Exposure Control Plan as required by OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. A major component of this plan is training on the control measures employees should follow to minimize the risk of exposure to potentially infectious materials. That's the purpose of this program—to provide workers with an understanding of how they can be exposed to bloodborne pathogens and what procedures and precautions they should follow to avoid infection.

Topics include the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, routes of entry, universal precautions, disposal and disinfection of contaminated materials and responding to an exposure.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

After watching the program, the participant should be able to explain the following:

- What information is contained in the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan;
- What the routes of entry for bloodborne pathogens to enter our bodies are;
- What the term "universal precautions" means and how to follow them to avoid infection;
- How to dispose of and disinfect potentially contaminated materials;
- How to properly respond to an exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS OVERVIEW

- Bloodborne pathogens are contaminants found in human blood or other bodily fluids that can transmit diseases such as hepatitis, HIV, various hemorrhagic fevers and other illnesses.
- Bloodborne pathogens can enter your body through contact with an open wound or cut, through needlesticks or other contaminated sharp objects, or through sexual contact.
- Bloodborne pathogens can also enter your body when ingested, or they may be inhaled, if the material becomes airborne.
- The various methods by which bloodborne pathogens may enter the body are called "routes of entry."
- In order to prevent the spread of diseases caused by contaminated blood or bodily fluids, your organization has developed an Exposure Control Plan as required by OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.
- Some of the important information contained in the exposure control plan includes:
 - Specific job training related to bloodborne pathogens;
 - A listing of job functions in which workers have "occupational exposure" to bloodborne pathogens;
 - A description of the control measures used to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
- The primary control measure used to prevent exposure to bloodborne pathogens is for all employees to follow "universal precautions" when encountering blood, bodily fluids or potentially contaminated items.
- Following universal precautions simply means treating all such materials as if they are contaminated and avoiding all direct contact unless proper protective equipment and barrier devices are utilized.
- If you discover blood, used needles or other potentially infectious materials, avoid direct contact and report the situation immediately so the items can be disposed of properly and the area decontaminated.
- All potential exposures to bloodborne pathogens such as needlesticks or unprotected contact with blood or bodily fluids must be reported to your supervisor right away.

THE BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

- Your organization has developed a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan as required by OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard.
- The purpose of the Exposure Control Plan is to document the policies and procedures used by your organization to prevent the spread of diseases due to contact with contaminated blood or other bodily fluids.
- The Exposure Control Plan outlines the job specific training each employee will receive to minimize their risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
- The Exposure Control Plan also includes a description of the signs and labels used to designate biological hazards and any engineering or work practice controls used to reduce the risk of exposure.
- Also listed in the Exposure Control Plan are the job functions considered to have "occupational exposure" to bloodborne pathogens.
- Occupational exposure means jobs where workers may reasonably be expected to handle or contact blood or other bodily fluids.
- Examples of jobs with occupational exposure include custodial staff who may be exposed to broken glass or other contaminated items, nurses who are exposed to blood or used needles and laundry personnel who may contact contaminated linens or other materials.
- Workers who have occupational exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens may receive the Hepatitis B vaccine at no cost.
- The Exposure Control plan will also document the organization's policies for post-exposure medical treatment, follow up and recordkeeping.
- The Exposure Control Plan must be reviewed and updated at least annually and whenever necessary to reflect new tasks or job functions that have occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
- The Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan is available for all employees to review upon request.

ROUTES OF ENTRY

- Bloodborne pathogens are contaminants found in human blood or other body fluids that can transmit diseases. The means by which bloodborne pathogens can enter our bodies are called "routes of entry" or "modes of transmission."
- Some routes of entry for bloodborne pathogens to enter our bodies include:
 - "Sharps" exposure, such as skin punctures from contaminated needles, broken glass, or other sharp objects. These types of sharp objects are generically referred to as "sharps."
 - Absorption: The absorption of bloodborne pathogens can occur when blood or other body fluids come in contact with broken or damaged skin or with mucous membranes such as the eyes, nose or mouth.
 - Ingestion: Ingestion of bloodborne pathogens occurs when infected material is eaten or swallowed.
 - Inhalation occurs when infected materials are inhaled into the lungs when they become airborne.
 - Finally, bloodborne pathogens can enter our bodies through sexual contact.
- Understanding these routes of entry and how bloodborne pathogens may enter your body is the first step in controlling your exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

- To prevent being exposed to bloodborne pathogens, employees must follow "universal precautions" when encountering blood, body fluids or potentially contaminated items.
- Following universal precautions simply means treating all such materials as if they are contaminated with bloodborne pathogens and avoiding all direct contact unless proper protective equipment and barrier devices are utilized.
- Following universal precautions also requires avoiding all contact with a bleeding co-worker. The best way to help an injured worker is to alert properly trained first responders.
- If you discover blood, used needles or other potentially infectious materials, avoid direct contact and report the situation immediately so the items can be disposed of properly and the area decontaminated.
- Certain job functions have "occupational exposure" to bloodborne pathogens. Some examples include nurses, first responders, laboratory workers and custodial staff.
- These types of workers will receive job specific training on the universal precautions they must follow when performing their job duties.

- Workers with occupational exposure will be trained to use barrier devices such as latex gloves, masks, face shields and other coverings to prevent exposure. Part of this training will include how to put on and remove the equipment without exposure.
- To remove disposable gloves, first pinch a lower section of one glove between your fingers and pull the glove off. Then, carefully use your finger to slide under the cuff of the remaining glove and pull it off while capturing the other glove inside.
- Because sharp objects can easily puncture latex gloves and other barrier devices, a broom and dustpan, tongs or similar devices must be used to handle sharp objects.
- All employees must follow universal precautions and avoid direct contact with blood or other body fluids. Those employees who have occupational exposure must always use the required PPE and barrier devices to prevent exposure while performing their jobs.

DISPOSAL & DISINFECTION OF CONTAMINATED MATERIALS

- A critical part of your organization's Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan is the proper disposal of bandages, gloves, needles and other items that are potentially contaminated with bloodborne pathogens.
- These items must only be placed in approved biohazard containers. Approved biohazard containers are typically red in color and display the biohazard symbol.
- Needles and other sharp items must be disposed of in a biohazard container sturdy enough to prevent being punctured. All biohazard containers must be closeable with a tight-fitting lid and leak resistant.
- Used needles and other contaminated sharp items should never be placed into the regular trash.
- Potentially contaminated work areas and non-disposable protective equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and decontaminated before being put back into service.
- Simply cleaning contaminated objects with soap and water is not sufficient against bloodborne pathogens. A 10 percent solution of bleach and water or an EPA-approved disinfectant must be used to kill any infectious materials that may be present.
- All employees should know the location of their facility's approved biohazard disposal containers so they may properly dispose of any contaminated items.
- If you have any questions about how to dispose of an item, check with your supervisor or safety manager.

RESPONDING TO AN EXPOSURE

- No matter how careful we may be when encountering bloodborne pathogens, there is always a risk of exposure. It's important that all employees know how to respond to a potential exposure.
- Wash all needlesticks and exposed cuts with warm water and an anti-bacterial soap.
- If your eyes or mucus membranes are exposed, flush them with water for 15 minutes.
- After washing the affected area, report the exposure to your supervisor right away. Reporting the exposure allows any necessary medical testing, post-exposure treatment, follow-up and required recordkeeping to promptly take place.

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ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. b

2. a

3. a

4. b

5. a

6. b

7. c

8. b

9. c

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REVIEW QUIZ

Name _____ Date _____

The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.

1. All potential exposures to bloodborne pathogens such as needlesticks or unprotected contact with blood or bodily fluids should be reported to your supervisor at the end of your shift.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. The purpose of the Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan is to document the policies and procedures used by your organization to prevent the spread of diseases due to contact with contaminated blood or other bodily fluids.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Workers who have occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens may receive the _____ vaccine at no cost.
 - a. Hepatitis B
 - b. Hepatitis C
 - c. HIV
4. The means by which bloodborne pathogens can enter our bodies are called routes of entry or _____.
 - a. Paths of infection
 - b. Modes of transmission
 - c. Methods of access
5. Understanding the various routes of entry and how bloodborne pathogens may enter your body is the first step in controlling your exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. Only those employees who have occupational exposure must follow universal precautions and avoid direct contact with blood or other body fluids.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Approved biohazard containers are typically _____ in color and display the biohazard symbol.
 - a. Blue
 - b. Green
 - c. Red
8. A _____ solution of bleach and water or an EPA-approved disinfectant must be used to kill any infectious materials that may be present.
 - a. 5 percent
 - b. 10 percent
 - c. 25 percent
9. If your eyes or mucus membranes are exposed to potentially contaminated materials, flush them with water for _____.
 - a. 5 minutes
 - b. 10 minutes
 - c. 15 minutes