

UNIVERSAL (STANDARD) PRECAUTIONS

Universal (or Standard) Precautions are the set of guidelines designed to help prevent transmission and minimize job-related exposure to blood-borne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials. The use of these precautions is required where possible, to eliminate the risk of transmission of infection, particularly those caused by bloodborne viruses.¹ Everyone can carry infectious microorganisms. As such, it must be assumed that all blood and other bodily fluids/substances are potentially infectious.

All organizations should have clear policies and procedures on using universal precautions and ensure that the training and resources to follow those guidelines are available and current.

BODILY FLUIDS TO WHICH UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS APPLY²

- Blood
- Vaginal Secretions
- Semen
- Tissues
- Fluids (cerebrospinal, synovial, pleural, peritoneal, pericardial, and amniotic)
- Any bodily fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood

BODILY FLUIDS TO WHICH UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS DO NOT APPLY²

- Feces
- Saliva or Nasal Secretions
- Breast milk
- Sputum
- Sweat
- Tears
- Urine
- Vomit



UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES:

HAND HYGIENE

Considered one of the most important control measures for reducing the spread of infection.

- Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using a personal towel or disposable paper towels to dry your hands.
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with blood, bodily fluids, or contaminated surfaces.
- Hands should also be washed immediately after glove removal.
- Hand sanitizer is an alternative way to clean hands when soap and water are unavailable.
- The CDC recommends using sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when hands are not visibly soiled.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

Proper cleaning is important for preventing and controlling infections. Ensure that policies and procedures are in place that outline routine cleaning and disinfection of work and living spaces. Thorough cleaning is essential for infection control – particularly in work areas – because deposits of dust, soil, and microbes on surfaces can transmit infection.

- All surfaces, including countertops, handrails, and doorknobs, should be cleaned (wiped over) regularly with a neutral pH solution and warm water solution, rinsed, and dried.
 - Neutral cleaning solutions are neither acidic nor alkaline. They should not contain hydroxides, silicates, or phosphates.
- Clean any exposed surfaces to blood or other bodily fluids with a mild bleach solution of 1 part water to 10 parts water.
 - Bleach solution should be left on for at least 2 minutes before being wiped off.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

A variety of barriers used alone or in combination to protect mucous membranes, skin, and clothing from contact with infectious agents. PPE includes gloves, masks, respirators, goggles, face shields, and gowns

MASKS, EYE PROTECTION, FACE SHIELDS

Wear a mask and eye protection, or a face shield, to protect eyes, nose, and mouth during cleaning procedures with blood and other bodily fluids

GOWNS

- Gowns can be used to protect clothes and the body when cleaning up blood and other bodily fluids or supporting an injured client.
- Dispose of potentially infectious or soiled waste in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

GLOVES

A protective barrier used when in contact with blood or other bodily fluids. Gloves are not an alternative to performing hand hygiene. Hand washing is required before putting on gloves and immediately after removal.

- Change and discard gloves after every use.
- Wear gloves (single-use, non-sterile) when there is potential contact with blood, bodily fluids, mucous membranes, or non-intact skin.
- Hand sanitizer should not be used on gloves to decontaminate them, nor should gloves be washed with soap and water and continued to be reused.

UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS PRACTICES CONTINUED

SHARP OBJECTS HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

- All sharp objects must be disposed of in a closable, puncture-resistant container that is red or labeled with a biohazard symbol. It must be leakproof on the sides and bottom and kept upright throughout use and disposal.
 - Filled containers can sometimes be disposed of at doctors' offices, hospitals, health departments, or fire departments. Do not overfill containers.
 - Certain FDA-cleared sharps disposal containers may qualify to be mailed to a disposal site.
 - Learn more about the disposal of medical sharp objects at SafeNeedleDisposal.org [<https://safeneedledisposal.org/>]
- Sharp object containers might be kept in bathrooms and mounted to the wall or in a high cabinet.
 - Inform staff and survivors/residents on how to use the container and safety precautions.
 - These containers should be kept out of reach of children.
- Contaminated needles must never be recapped or be removed from disposable syringes by hand.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS TO EMPLOY

- Wash soiled laundry in hot water and dry on high.
- Cover all open wounds on your body.
- Sterilize any personal care products that may be exposed to blood or other bodily fluids.
- Employ caution when storing bleach and other cleaning chemicals, especially when children are present.
 - Never mix bleach and ammonia, as these produce a poisonous gas.

POST-COVID ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS

While these precautions came from the COVID-19 pandemic, these should be employed when staff and residents are sick with other illnesses such as the flu, RSV, or strep throat.

- Provide COVID testing to residents and staff when needed and when requested.
- Wear a mask if a resident is sick.
- Provide free masks to all residents and staff.
- Provide disinfecting wipes throughout the shelter and regularly wipe down surfaces.
- For residents who are sick, provide isolation space where they can recover.
 - If the resident is accompanied by children, a discussion with the parent regarding family isolation should occur.
 - Offer transportation to medical appointments so residents can receive timely testing and treatment.

Stay informed on changing COVID-19 precautions and isolation recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

CONCERNS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS?

Health Departments are well-trained in local and state requirements. They are able to assist and answer any questions.

REFERENCES

UNIVERSAL (OR STANDARD) PRECAUTIONS & OPIM

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UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS DO & DO NOT APPLY

²<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00000039.htm#:~:text=For%20universal%20precautions%2C%20protective%20barriers,%2C%20masks%2C%20and%20protective%20eyewear>
³<https://www.osha.gov/bloodborne-pathogens/worker-protections>

HANDWASHING

³<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html> reference 15,17,18.

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GLOVES

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MASK

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/GeneralHospitalDevicesandSupplies/PersonalProtectiveEquipment/ucm055977.htm> content current as of 3/10/2023

<http://Knowlts.NIOSH.gov> DHHS (NIOSH) Publication Number 2013-138 \ June 2013. CDC recommends the N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirator - Tight-fitting. Tested and approved by NIOSH. Vs. the Surgical Mask - Loose fit creates gaps where particles can enter. Cleared by the FDA found on page 3.

GOWNS

Apic.org/ shelter disasters

chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpccajpcglclefindmkaj/https://apic.org/Resource_/TinyMceFileManager/Practice_Guidance/Emergency_Preparedness/Shelters_Disasters.pdf pg.13 reference 6

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ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING

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SHARP HANDLING AND DISPOSAL

[OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standards.](#) Engineering and Work Practice Controls Post-COVID Illness Precautions

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-correctional-settings.html#:~:text=Offer%20high%2Dquality%20masks%2Frespirators,for%20more%20information%20on%20PPE>