

LABORATORY SAFETY FOR HANDLING OF BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS

You should be aware of the recommended precautions for handling human blood, blood products (e.g., serum, plasma, cells) or body fluids with the potential risk on transmission of hepatitis B virus and/or Human immunodeficiency Disease virus (HIV). We occasionally use human blood samples in this course and obtain blood samples from regular blood donors whenever possible. For your safety, we require that universal precautions are used in the handling of any blood samples. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed the following recommendations:

1. All fluids should be considered infectious and handled and transported appropriately. The type of precaution is one of "universal precaution" for the reason that a sample may come from an undiagnosed AIDS or hepatitis B individual.
2. Limit the use of needles to an absolute necessity and never manually recap, bend or break a needle. The simple avoidance of potential contact from this source greatly reduces risks. This includes never removing a needle from a disposable contaminated syringe and disposing of material properly in puncture resistant containers. Scalpels, pasteur pipettes and other sharp lab items should also be disposed into an appropriately labelled puncture resistant container.
3. Wear latex or vinyl gloves whenever handling or obtaining body specimens of any kind. Gloves will not give much protection from a needle stick, but they will prevent any skin contamination from a specimen, thus preventing inoculation through cuts or abrasions. Gloves should be disposed into the appropriate biohazard container. All materials in contact with blood when possible will be sterilized by autoclaving.
4. When gloves are removed or changed, wash hands. When a person leaves a laboratory room, wash hands. When in doubt, wash hands. The simple act of washing away the oils on the surface of our hands is an important step in protection from many potential infections.
5. Wear a lab coat and leave it in the lab. Wear safety glasses, goggles or work behind a plastic protective shield when handling blood products to prevent splashing of blood into the eyes.
6. Nothing should ever go into a laboratorian's mouth while in the lab. No eating, drinking, smoking or mouth pipetting. This includes things such as chewing gum, and chewing on pencils or pens. Gloved hands also should never touch the face, even to rub an eye or itchy nose.
7. Decontaminate work surfaces before and after use of blood or body fluids. In case of a spill, immediately decontaminate by covering area with a paper towel, flood with a 10% solution of bleach or other appropriate disinfectant and allow to stand for 10-15 minutes. Do not pick up any pieces of glass with your hands.
8. If you routinely handle blood or body fluids, vaccination for hepatitis B is recommended. In case of any accident with exposure to blood with a needle puncture, open wound, etc. inform you lab instructor immediately. Clean the cut and report to the Health Center immediately. Recommended post-exposure procedures are defined for any accidents. Please comply with the above recommendations. Your health may depend on it.