

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Bloodborne Pathogens

Workers in many different occupations are at risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS. First aid team members, housekeeping personnel in some settings, nurses and other healthcare providers are examples of workers who may be at risk of exposure. Gather employees and review these safety tips for bloodborne pathogen exposure prevention:

### WORKSAFE TIPS

#### WHAT IS A BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN?

- Bloodborne pathogen means pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans.

#### WHO IS AFFECTED?

- Hospital workers
- First aid providers
- Paramedics
- Nursing home workers
- Custodians
- Nurses and home health technicians

#### BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS INCLUDE:

- Hepatitis B virus
- Hepatitis C virus
- HIV
- AIDS

#### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Prevent exposure to the eyes, nose and mouth
- Use surgical gloves to protect hands
- Use eye protection to protect against sprays
- Use face protection to protect against sprays
- Use a gown to protect the body and clothing

#### IMMEDIATELY AFTER EXPOSURE TO BLOOD

- Flush material from the skin.
- Wash needle sticks & cuts with soap and water.
- Flush splashes to the nose, eyes & skin
- Irrigate eyes with water, saline or sterile flush..
- Report the exposure immediately.

#### *WORKERS ROUTINELY EXPOSED TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS MUST BE OFFERED A HEPATITIS B VACCINATION*

- No evidence shows that using antiseptics or squeezing the wound will reduce the risk of transmission of a blood borne pathogen.
- Do not flush with caustic agents or bleach.

#### PROMPT REPORTING IS ESSENTIAL!

- Do not postpone reporting.
- Immediate treatment is necessary to prevent bloodborne pathogen transmission.
- Post exposure treatment may be recommended and started immediately.
- Discuss the risks of acquiring a disease with the healthcare provider.
- Healthcare providers may need to draw blood.
- Be completely honest and forthright during the investigation – accurate exposure information could prove to be life saving!

#### PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- All first aid kits should have PPE available for first aid providers.
- All patient care rooms should have PPE available for nurses and physicians during a medical emergency.
- Home health workers should have a complete Bloodborne pathogen PPE kit.
- Create a “bloodborne pathogen response kit” complete with PPE and cleaning supplies.

## BEST PRACTICES

- Consider all body fluids as potentially infected.
- Practice universal precautions.
- Remove gloves using the inside-out method.
- Know where response kits are located.
- Report exposures promptly, and in writing.
- Wear PPE when handling body fluids, working with patients or cleaning contaminated surfaces.
- Wash hands often, before and after patient contact, before eating & after restroom use



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