

## **INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL/UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS (AR 4119)**

Under SB 2192 The District is mandated to notify its employees annually regarding AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis B infections.

### **What infectious diseases could you be exposed to in the school setting?**

The most common infectious diseases in the United States can be found in our schools. The common cold, caused by 110 separate types of viruses, flu, impetigo, ringworm, head lice, streptococcal sore throat, and measles are just a few. These illnesses are passed from person to person in schools and other places where people share air, space, furniture, equipment, and tools. They are caused by many kinds of germs including bacteria, fungi, protozoa, and viruses.

Two of the most serious diseases deserve particular attention: AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis B. Both are bloodborne diseases which can be spread by the blood and the body fluid containing the blood of an infected person.

### **How can AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis B be prevented or avoided?**

There is no vaccine to prevent AIDS/HIV infections. There is, however, a safe and effective vaccine to prevent Hepatitis B. Hepatitis B vaccine can be obtained from your private physician. It is not available through your local health department.

AIDS/HIV infections and Hepatitis B are most commonly spread through sexual intercourse and by sharing needles with others to inject drugs. By abstaining from these two activities, the major risk of exposure is eliminated. Sexual relations are safe if both partners are uninfected and mutually monogamous. Following other safe sex practices can greatly reduce the risk of getting AIDS/HIV or Hepatitis B from a partner who is infected. If needles are shared to inject drugs, all equipment must be cleaned with household bleach and rinsed with water to reduce the risk of infection.

### **What is AIDS/HIV infection?**

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is the advanced stage of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infections. The virus attacks the body's natural defense (immune) system, leaving it vulnerable to life-threatening infections from other diseases and allowing rare cancers to develop. There is no cure. To date, more than half the people in the United States diagnosed with AIDS have died.

### **How is AIDS/HIV infection spread?**

The probability that the AIDS/HIV virus will be transmitted in school, the work place, or at public gatherings is remote. AIDS/HIV infection is not transmitted from person to person through everyday activities. You will not get AIDS by being around or working with a person who is infected or by having ordinary daily contact with an HIV infected person.

### **AIDS/HIV Infection may be spread by:**

1. Sharing intravenous (IV) needles and/or syringes with someone who is infected
2. Penetrating the skin with needles that have been used to inject an infected person
3. Sharing unsterile instruments used to penetrate the skin (e.g. instruments used in tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing, and razors)
4. Any sexual activity involving direct genital/oral contact with semen, blood, or vaginal secretions of an infected person
5. Direct contact with infected blood on broken skin (i.e., cuts and scratches)
6. Direct contact with mucous membranes of the eye with the blood of an infected person
7. Receiving a blood transfusion from an infected person (Since 1985, this risk is reduced to 1 chance in 68,000 transfusions.)
8. Being born to an infected mother

### **What is Hepatitis B?**

Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by a virus found in the blood and other body fluids of an infected person. The incubation period for this illness can be from 1 to 6 months. Permanent liver damage may result from Hepatitis B.

### **How is Hepatitis B spread?**

Hepatitis B is spread in exactly the same way as AIDS/HIV (see 1-8 above). The only addition would be the sharing of toothbrushes with a person infected with Hepatitis B.

### **What universal precautions can you take to protect yourself from all infections in the school setting?**

In the school setting it is impossible for you to know who is a carrier of an infection and what germ (organism) is present. Carriers do not always show outward signs of infection and often are not aware of being infected. You would most likely be exposed to AIDS/HIV and/or

Hepatitis B when your scratched, cut, or broken skin comes in direct contact with the blood or body fluids containing blood of an infected individual. Begin today to take the “universal precautions” that will help to protect you from all infectious diseases.

All students and staff shall routinely observe the following universal precautions for the prevention of infectious disease:

1. Wear disposable waterproof gloves whenever you expect to come into direct hand contact with blood, other body fluids, or contaminated items or surfaces. This applies to incidents including, but not limited to, caring for nosebleeds or cuts, cleaning up after spills, or handling clothes soiled by blood or body fluids. Do not reuse gloves. After each use, remove the gloves without touching them outside and dispose of them in a lined waste container. Gowns or smocks should also be worn if you anticipate soiling clothes by body fluids or secretions.
2. Wash your hands and any other contacted skin surfaces thoroughly for 15 to 30 seconds with dispensable soap and warm running water; rinse under running water; and thoroughly dry with disposable paper towels:
  - a. Immediately after any accidental contact with blood, body fluids, drainage from wounds, or with soiled garments, objects or surfaces
  - b. Immediately after removing gloves, gowns, or smocks
  - c. Before eating, drinking, or feeding
  - d. Before handling food, cleaning utensils, or kitchen equipment
  - e. Before and after using the toilet or diapering
3. When running water is not available, use antiseptic hand cleanser and clean towels or antiseptic towelettes, and use soap and running water as soon as feasible.
4. Properly dispose of contaminated materials and label them as biohazardous.
  - a. Place blood, body fluids, gloves, bloody dressings, and other absorbent materials into appropriately labeled plastic bags or lined waste containers

- b. Place needles, syringes, and other sharp disposable objects in leak-proof, puncture-proof containers
  - c. Bag soiled towels and other laundry. Presoak with disinfectant, and launder with soap and water
  - d. Dispose of urine, vomit, or feces in the sanitary sewer system
5. Do not care for others' injuries if you have any uncovered bleeding or oozing wound or non-contact skin condition
  6. Use a mouthpiece, resuscitation bag, or other ventilation device when readily available in place of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

Staff shall immediately report any exposure incident or first-aid incident in accordance with the District's Exposure Control Plan or other procedures.

These universal precautions will help protect you from AIDS/HIV infection, Hepatitis B, and many other infectious diseases. You do not need to know which people around you are infected or which disease(s) they may have, because you are always prepared. Using the universal precautions will result in fewer illnesses for you, your family, and others around you.