

Standard precautions for infection control

Health and Safety Directorate



Standard precautions for infection control should be used by all employees, students, visitors, volunteers, contractors and others to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious diseases during care procedures.

What are standard precautions?

Standard precautions in the workplace involve the use of safe work practices and protective barriers for the control of the spread of infection from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection.

It is not possible to reliably identify sources of infections or communicable diseases, therefore it is necessary to presume that the blood (including dried blood) and body substances of **all persons** be considered as potential sources of infection independent of diagnosis or perceived risk.

When do I use standard precautions?

Standard precautions must be used before and after care procedures, when providing first aid, when handling and disposing of sharps and contaminated material and when handling animals and potentially infectious agricultural substances.

There is a potential risk of infection when exposed to:

- blood, including dried blood
- All other body fluids, secretions and excretions, including saliva and mucous.
- broken skin
- Mucous membranes e.g. mouth and nose.

What do I need to do?

1. Use good hygiene practices

Wash your hands after any contamination, following any care procedure and after any activity which involves contaminated substances whether or not gloves are worn.

2. Take care of your skin

Take care of your skin as it is the first barrier to disease

and protect damaged skin by covering with a waterproof dressing or by gloves.

3. Use good handling and disposal procedures

Minimise contact with potentially infectious substances by using personal protective equipment such as gloves, aprons, masks or goggles.

Ensure that reusable equipment such as that used in first aid provision is cleaned after use and single use items are discarded after use.

Follow the Department's procedures when handling and disposing of sharps and use a suitable sharps container.

Dispose of other contaminated or infectious waste, such as from first aid or care procedures, in a plastic bag which is tied securely and placed inside a second plastic bag and tied securely then placed in the workplace garbage hopper.

Contain all blood and body fluids i.e. confining spills, splashes and contamination of the environment and the prompt clean-up of spills.

4. Take prompt action if contact is made with blood or body fluids

Wash skin with mild soap and water, rinse eyes with water, rinse your mouth and spit out.

Further information

[Contact the Health and Safety team](#) on 1800 811 523

[Infection control procedures](#)