
GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH SIGNIFICANT EXPOSURE TO BLOOD INCLUDING NEEDLESTICK INJURIES OR OTHER HIGH RISK BODY FLUIDS

A significant exposure can be defined as being exposed to blood or high risk body fluids by either:

- A percutaneous exposure causing bleeding or visible skin puncture e.g. with a needle or sharp instrument
- Mucous membrane exposure e.g. splash to eyes, nose
- Exposure of broken skin

If a member of staff becomes significantly exposed to blood:

- Encourage bleeding from the puncture wound. Do not suck.
- Wash thoroughly, for 5 minutes under cold running water, any injury or abrasion that has been contaminated with blood.
- Splashes into eye or mouth should be rinsed out with copious amounts of water or saline.
- Cover the wound with a waterproof dressing.
- Report incident immediately to line manager, who should make out an accident report.
- Identify the source of sharps contamination if possible.

If this is an injury from a high risk source you will need to go to Accident and Emergency for further treatment. This should be done immediately, if possible otherwise within 48 hours of injury

Spillages

Treat spillages of blood or other bodily fluids visibly contaminated with blood

- Put on latex gloves and a plastic apron.
- Apply sodium hypochlorite 1% or similar chlorine releasing agent.
- Leave for 2 minutes.
- Mop up with paper towels and dispose of as clinical waste.
- Clean area with hot water and detergent.



Douglas Bralsford
Managing Director
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Graham Limer
Technical Director
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