

## **HANDLING BODY FLUIDS**

### GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING BODY FLUIDS IN SCHOOL

The body fluids of all persons should be considered to contain potentially infectious agents (germs). The term "body fluids" includes: blood, semen, drainage from scrapes and cuts, feces, urine, vomitus, respiratory secretions (e.g., nasal discharge) and saliva. Contact with body fluids presents a risk of infection with a variety of germs. In general, however, the risk is very low and dependent on a variety of factors including the type of fluid with which contact is made and the type of contact made with it.

Table I provides examples of particular germs that may occur in body fluids of children and the respective transmission concerns. It must be emphasized that with the exception of blood, which is normally sterile, the body fluids with which one may come in contact usually contain many organisms, some of which may cause disease. Furthermore, many germs may be carried by individuals who have no symptoms of illness. These individuals may be at various stages of infection: incubating disease, mildly infected without symptoms, or chronic carriers of certain infectious agents including the AIDS and hepatitis viruses. In fact, transmission of communicable diseases is likely to occur from contact with infected body fluids of unrecognized carriers than from contact with fluids from recognized individuals because precautions are not always carried out.

TABLE I  
TRANSMISSION CONCERNS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING  
BODY FLUID SOURCE OF INFECTIOUS AGENTS

<u>BODY FLUID SOURCE</u>	<u>ORGANISM OF CONCERN</u>	<u>TRANSMISSION CONCERN</u>
Blood -cuts/abrasions -nosebleeds	Hepatitis B virus AIDS virus Cytomegalo virus	Bloodstream inoculation through cuts and abrasions on hands
* Feces -incontinence	Salmonella bacteria Shigella bacteria Rotavirus Hepatitis A virus	Oral inoculation from contaminated hands
* Urine -incontinence	Cytomegalovirus	Bloodstream and oral inoculation from contaminated hands
Respiratory Secretions -saliva -nasal discharge	Mononucleosis Common cold virus Influenza virus  Hepatitis B virus	Oral inoculation from contaminated hands  Bloodstream inoculation through cuts and abrasions on hands; bites
* Vomitus	Gastrointestinal contaminated hands (Norwalk agent Rotavirus)	Oral inoculation from viruses, e.g.,
Semen	Hepatitis B AIDS virus Gonorrhea	Sexual contact (intercourse)

\* Possible transmission of AIDS and Hepatitis B is of little concern from these sources. There is no evidence at this time to suggest that the AIDS virus is present in these fluids.

CONTACT WITH BODY FLUIDS

When possible, direct skin contact with body fluids should be avoided. Disposable gloves

should be available in at least the office of the custodians, nurses, or principal. Gloves are recommended when direct hand contact with body fluids is anticipated (e.g., treating bloody noses, handling clothes soiled by incontinence, cleaning small spills by hand). Gloves used for this purpose should be put in a plastic bag or lined trash can, secured, and disposed of daily.

### DIRECT SKIN CONTACT

In many instances, unanticipated skin contact with body fluids may occur in situations where gloves may be immediately unavailable (e.g., when wiping a runny nose, applying pressure to a bleeding injury outside the classroom, helping a child in the bathroom). In these instances, hands and other affected skin areas of all exposed persons should be routinely washed with soap and water after direct contact has ceased. Clothing and other non-disposable items (e.g., towels used to wipe up body fluid) that are soaked through with body fluids should be rinsed and placed in plastic bags. If presoaking is required to remove stains, (e.g., blood, feces), use gloves to rinse or soak the item in cold water prior to bagging. Clothing should be sent home for washing with appropriate directions to parents/teachers. Contaminated disposable items (e.g., tissues, paper towels, diapers), should be handled as with disposable gloves.

### REMOVING SPILLED BODY FLUIDS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

Most schools have standard procedures already in place for removing body fluids (e.g., vomitus). These procedures should be reviewed to determine whether appropriate cleaning and disinfection steps have been included. Many schools stock sanitary, absorbent agents specifically intended for cleaning body fluid spills. Disposable gloves should be worn when using these agents. The dry material is applied to the area, left for a few minutes to absorb the fluid, and then vacuumed or swept up. The vacuum bag or sweepings should be disposed of in a plastic bag. Broom and dustpan should be rinsed in a disinfectant. No special handling is required for vacuuming equipment.

### HAND WASHING PROCEDURES

Proper hand washing requires the use of soap and water and vigorous washing under a stream of running water for approximately 10 seconds. Soap suspends easily removable soil and microorganisms allowing them to be washed off. Running water is necessary to carry away dirt and debris. Rinse under running water. Use paper towels to thoroughly dry hands.

### DISINFECTANTS

An intermediate level disinfectant should be used to clean surfaces contaminated with body fluids. Such disinfectants will kill vegetative bacteria, fungi, tuberculosis bacillus and viruses. The disinfectant should be registered by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use as a disinfectant in medical facilities and hospitals.

Various classes of disinfectants are listed below. Hypochlorite solution (bleach) is preferred for objects that may be put in the mouth.

1. Ethyl or isopropyl alcohol (70%)
2. Phenolic germicidal detergent in a 1 per cent aqueous solution (e.g., Lysol\*)
3. Sodium Hypochlorite with at least 100 ppm available chlorine (½ cup household bleach in 1 gallon water, needs to be freshly prepared each time it is used)
4. Quaternary ammonium germicidal detergent in 2 per cent aqueous solution (e.g., Triquat\*, Mytar\* or Sage\*)
5. Iodophor germicidal detergent with 500 ppm available iodine (e.g., Wescodyne\*)

\*Brand names used only for examples of each type of germicidal solution, and should not be considered an endorsement of a specific product.

### DISINFECTION OF HARD SURFACES AND CARE OF EQUIPMENT

After removing the soil, a disinfectant is applied. Mops should be soaked in the disinfectant after use and rinsed thoroughly or washed in a hot water cycle before rinse. Disposable cleaning equipment and water should be placed in a toilet or plastic bag as appropriate. Non-disposable cleaning equipment (dust pans, buckets) should be thoroughly rinsed in the disinfectant. The disinfectant solution should be promptly disposed down a drain pipe. Remove gloves and discard in appropriate receptacles.

### DISINFECTION OF RUGS

Apply sanitary absorbent agent, let dry and vacuum. If necessary, mechanically remove with dust pan and broom in disinfectant. If necessary, wash brush with soap and water. Dispose of non-reusable cleaning equipment as noted above.

### LAUNDRY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOTHING SOILED WITH BODY FLUIDS

The most important factor in laundering clothing contaminated in the school setting is elimination of potentially infectious agents. Clothing soaked with body fluids should be washed separately from other items. Presoaking may be required for heavily soiled clothing. Otherwise, wash and dry as usual. If the material is bleachable, add ½ cup household bleach to the wash cycle. If the material is not colorfast, add ½ cup of non-clorox bleach (e.g., Clorox II, Borateem) to the wash cycle.

Ref: Information and Guidelines: Prevention of Disease Transmission in Schools, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). State of Connecticut, Department of Education and Department of Health Services, March 1985.