

BODY SUBSTANCE PRECAUTIONS

A system of infection prevention and control currently in use is called Body Substance Precautions (BSP). This system focuses on keeping all moist body substances (blood, feces, urine, wound drainage, tissues, oral secretions, and other body fluids) from the hands of personnel. This is done primarily by increased glove usage and handwashing. The Body Substance Precautions system is consistent with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Hospital Association, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that point out the need to consider ALL blood and ALL body fluids as potentially contagious regardless of the client's diagnosis. In order to comply with the CDC policies, the following recommendations should be used. The need to use barriers must focus on the caregivers' (In-Home Aides) routine contact with the clients.

Because a medical history and examination cannot reliably identify all persons with infectious diseases, we treat ALL blood and body substances as potentially infectious rather than focus precautions only on the clients who are diagnosed with infectious diseases.

Implementing the Body Substance Precautions System includes the following elements and should be followed by ALL personnel at all times, regardless of the client's diagnosis.

Body Substance Precautions

1. Wear gloves when it is likely that hands will be in contact with mucous membranes, nonintact skin, and/or any moist body substance (blood, urine, feces, wound drainage, oral secretions, sputum, vomitus, or items/surfaces soiled with these substances). Gloves should be changed and hands washed between contacts with clients. If a glove is torn or a needle stick or other injury occurs, the glove should be removed, discarded in appropriate container, hands washed, and a new glove used promptly as client safety permits.

REMEMBER: Gloves are not a cure-all. They reduce the likelihood of contaminating the hands, but hands should be washed after removing the gloves.

- a. Use non-sterile/disposable gloves for procedures involving contact with mucous membranes unless otherwise indicated and for other client care procedures.
- b. Change gloves and wash hands between contacts with clients.
- c. Do NOT wash or disinfect examination gloves for reuse.
- d. General-purpose utility gloves (e.g., rubber household gloves) may be used for housekeeping. These utility gloves may be decontaminated and reused but should be discarded if they are peeling, cracked, discolored, or if they have punctures, tears, or other evidence of deterioration. Utility gloves should remain in the client's home.

BODY SUBSTANCE PRECAUTIONS (*continued*)

2. Wash hands often - always between clients'/clients' care and after any contact with body substances or contaminated materials. Focus on the areas around and under fingernails and between fingers. Always keep your hands away from your face or you may give yourself (inoculate with) the infectious microorganisms.
3. Wear masks and/or eye protection when it is likely that eyes or mucous membranes will be splashed with body substances (your supervisor/nurse will give you further directions).
4. Protect your clothing with a plastic apron or gown when it is likely that clothing will be soiled with body substances.
5. Health care workers with draining lesions or weeping dermatitis must refrain from all direct client care and from handling client care equipment until cleared by a physician. These conditions put the employee and the client at risk of infection.
6. Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure.

Some Examples of Situations Using the Body Substance Precautions System

1. Follow Body Substance Precautions when caring for clients with bowel and/or bladder problems.

It is difficult to clean a client who is incontinent without getting urine and/or stool on the hands. Gloves should be worn routinely and for helping clients with toileting activities. One major risk is getting germs underneath the caregiver's fingernails. Gloves reduce this risk and make handwashing after completing the task easier and more efficient. A plastic gown may also be needed for cleaning clients/ clients who are incontinent and for changing their clothes and the bed linen. Obtain the plastic apron before beginning the tasks.

2. Wearing gloves when emptying catheter bags is a wise practice because it is difficult not to get urine on your hands.
3. When a client has a rash or skin lesions on his/her body, it could be due to any number of causes. The lesions may be due to varicella (chicken pox or zoster), herpes simplex, scabies, syphilis, impetigo, a drug reaction, or other causes. Prompt recognition of the rash, identification of the cause, prompt appropriate intervention, and proper use of gloves and handwashing can prevent transmission of microorganisms to others.