

# Annual Training RSA

## Module 4: Tips for Reducing Exposure to Bloodborne and Other Infectious Diseases

### Registered Nurse

# Session Goals

## **Participants will be able to do the following:**

- Identify the key steps of Standard Precautions.
- Outline the pathways through which homecare workers are exposed to risks from bloodborne and other infectious diseases.
- Describe strategies and tools to reduce risks.
- Follow positive problem-solving steps with clients.

# Standard Precautions—Key Steps

1. Frequently wash hands or use alcohol-based handrubs.
2. Use gloves.
3. Wear an apron, mask, and eye protectors as necessary.
4. Properly handle and dispose of possibly infected linens and wastes.
5. Properly handle and dispose of sharp instruments, such as needles.



# Bloodborne and Other Common Infectious Diseases

## Bloodborne Diseases:

- HIV/AIDS.
- Hepatitis B and C.

## Other Common Infectious Diseases:

- Bacterial:
  - “Staph” skin infection.
  - Pneumonia.
  - Urinary tract infection.
- Parasitic—*Giardia* diarrhea.
- Viral:
  - Influenza, or the flu.
  - Respiratory infections.
  - Diarrhea.
  - Chickenpox, measles, mumps.

# Understanding How Infectious Diseases Spread

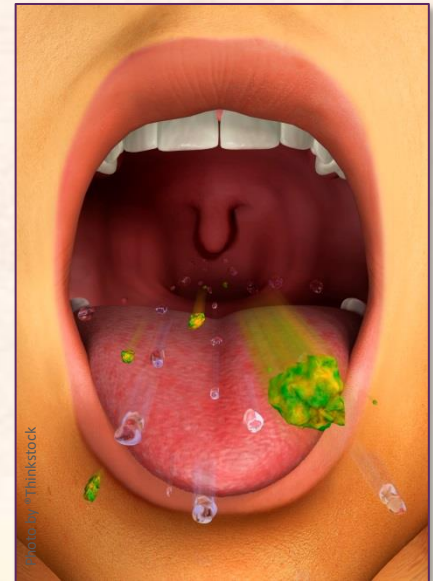
## Where Infection Lives

### Blood or Body Fluids:

- Urine
- Feces
- Tears
- Phlegm
- Saliva
- Vomit
- Sweat
- Semen
- Vaginal fluid
- Food
- Water
- Organic matter
- Pets
- Pests

# Pathways Through Which Infectious Diseases Spread

- Being stuck by a sharp with infected body fluids.
- Touching infectious people—or surfaces, objects, clothing, and linens that carry body fluids.
- Breathing spray from coughs, sneezes, talking.
- Eating, drinking, or handling infected food, water, or dirt.
- Being bitten by animals and insects, or by coming into contact with animals' body fluids.





# What Symptoms Suggest a Person Has an Infectious Disease?

**People may have any of a variety of symptoms:**

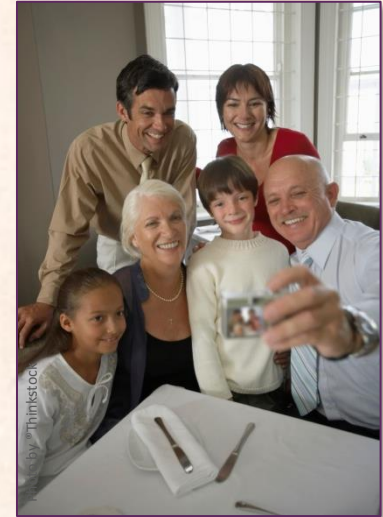
- Fever or chills.
- Loss of appetite.
- Fatigue.
- Aches and pains.
- Diarrhea or other bowel problems.
- Difficulty breathing.
- Rashes, jaundice.



**Or, they may have no observable symptoms at all!**

# Who is at Most Risk of Becoming Ill When Exposed to Infection?

- Babies, children, and elders.
- People who are sick.
- Those with pre-existing conditions and weak immune systems.
- Those who don't eat a healthy diet.
- Those with poor personal hygiene or living conditions.
- Those who are over-tired or stressed.
- Those who don't wash their hands often.



**Anyone  
CAN be  
at risk!**



# Because Clients are Often at Great Risk of Becoming Ill ...

## Homecare workers need to ...

- Avoid coming to work when they are sick.
- Always cover their mouths and noses when sneezing or coughing—using tissue or their upper sleeve or elbow.
- Always wash their hands or use alcohol handrub after coughing or sneezing.



# What Advice Would You Give Ana?



Ana is a homecare worker who has read a handout she picked up at a health fair on bloodborne and infectious diseases. She's feeling afraid of continuing to do her work.

She worriedly exclaims, “There are so many ways we can get sick! And there are so many illnesses we can be exposed to! How can I feel safe working in clients’ homes?”

**What advice would you give her?**

# Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe Around Infectious Diseases

- Use all Standard Precautions!
- Be sure to get a flu shot every year.
- Get other vaccines—such as for Hepatitis B—as needed.
- Don't go to work if you are sick.
- Avoid sharing drinking cups, bottles, eating utensils, and other food items.
- Encourage everyone to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their upper sleeve—and do it yourself!



# Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe Around Infectious Diseases

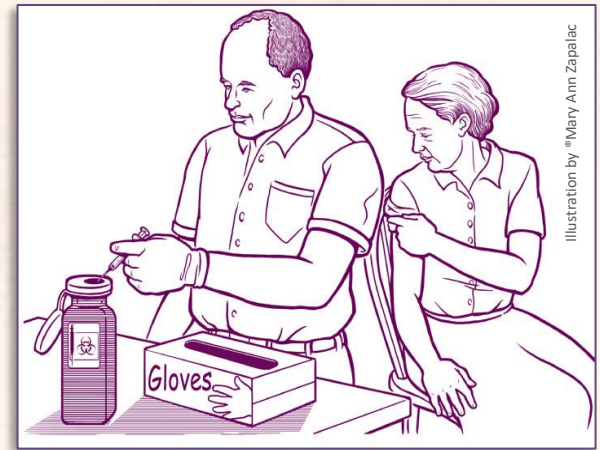
- Bandage cuts, sores, or breaks on your own skin and on clients' skin (unless doctor says no).
- Use a fresh bleach solution to carefully clean surfaces that may be infected.
- Avoid setting objects such as purses and bags on potentially infected surfaces.
- Take in only necessary equipment and supplies.
- Do not do tasks in ways or circumstances that may expose you to infection.





# Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe When Handling Sharps

- Handle sharps with extreme care. Point sharps away from your body.
- Discard sharps immediately after use into an approved sharps container. Never put sharps in a regular recycling bin or trash can.
- Never reach blindly into a trash bag, behind furniture, or into other areas where sharps might be.
- Never recap a needle or touch the point.





# Tips for Staying Healthy and Safe When Handling Soiled Laundry

- Use disposable gloves and heavy-duty plastic bags when handling soiled laundry.
- Tie laundry bags shut and make sure they don't leak.
- Don't fill bags with too much laundry. It might cause you to trip and fall, or the bags might break open.



# Talk it Over!

**Bring up health and safety issues as soon as possible.**

- Plan the discussion.
- Be respectful—make a request, not a demand.
- Use “I” statements. Describe your health and safety concern, how it affects you, and what the impact might be on you and the client.
- Listen. See the issue from the client’s point of view.
- Consider several solutions beyond your first choice.
- Know your bottom line.

# ***Thanks for Your Great Participation!***

## **Additional Resources:**

- Homecare workers' handbook: *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others* .  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-103/pdf/2015-103.pdf>
- NIOSH Hazard Review: “Occupational Hazards and Home Health Care.”  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-125/pdfs/2010-125.pdf>
- *Home and Community Health Worker Handbook*, British Columbia, Canada, OHSAH.  
<http://www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/6C69D638-8587-4096-A8AA-7D2B0141C3B2/59614/HandbookHomeandCommunityHealthcareWorkersHandbook.pdf>
- *Safety Manual for Homecare Workers*, Oregon Homecare Commission.  
<http://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9062.pdf>

# Credits

- MFD Homecare Consultant, LLC