

Bloodborne Pathogen Policy

Overview

As a healthcare provider, you may come into contact with infectious agents present in blood and other bodily fluids. Understanding and adhering to proper safety protocols is essential for protecting yourself and others.

Bloodborne Diseases

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms that can cause serious illness when transmitted through blood. Common diseases of concern include:

- **Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)**
- **Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)**
- **Hepatitis D Virus (HDV)** – Can only occur in conjunction with HBV
- **Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

Note: Hepatitis A and E are **not** transmitted via blood and are excluded from this policy.

Among these, **HBV** and **HIV** pose the greatest risk through blood and body fluid exposure. HBV is significantly more virulent and can survive in dried blood for up to **7–14 days**.

Exposure Control Plan

The Dental Hygiene Clinic adheres to the College's Exposure Control Plan, which outlines specific tasks and roles that may involve contact with bloodborne pathogens. This plan is regularly reviewed to ensure effectiveness and regulatory compliance.

Methods of Compliance

Standard Precautions

To minimize infection risks, all human blood and certain body fluids should be treated as potentially infectious. We apply **Standard Precautions** universally, regardless of a patient's known status, to prevent accidental exposure.

Engineering & Work Practice Controls

To further reduce risk, the Dental Hygiene Program maintains and regularly updates safety protocols. These include:

- **Hand Hygiene**
- **Eye Wash Stations**
- **Safe Handling & Disposal of Sharps**

- **Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
- **Restricted Personal Habits** (e.g., no eating or drinking in clinical areas)
- **Housekeeping Standards**
- **Proper Management of Regulated Waste**