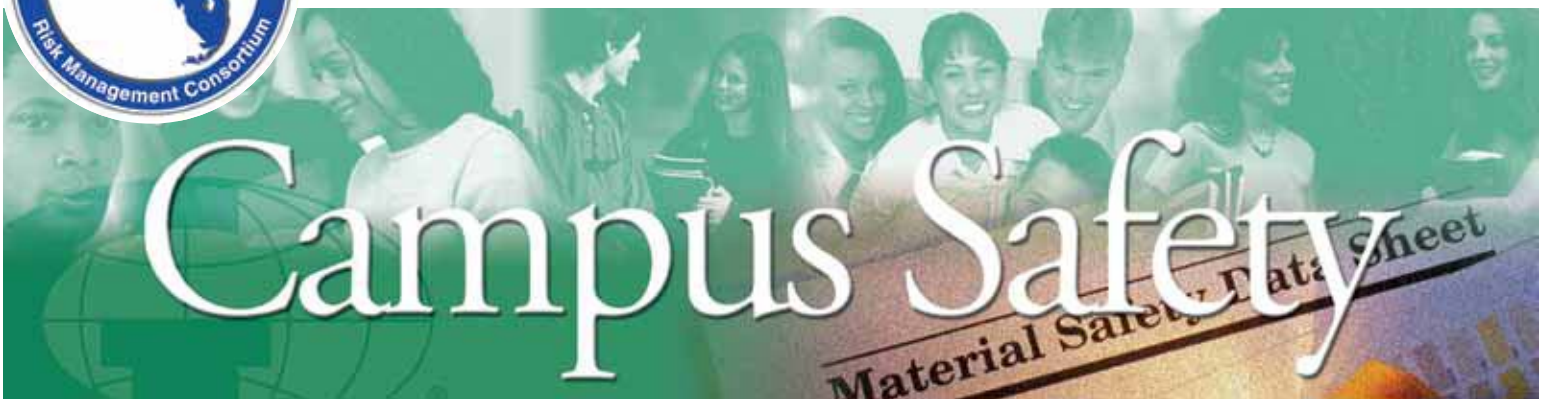
Florida Community Colleges Risk Management Consortium



Preventing Blood-Borne Pathogen Exposure

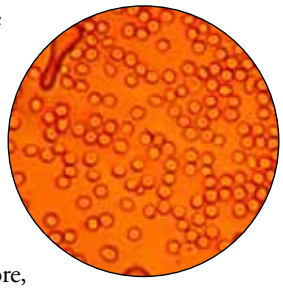
Every day, students and employees are potentially exposed to blood transfers from injuries sustained by others. Hepatitis and HIV continue to be major health issues for students and employees. It is important to recognize the level of risk that the students and employees face from exposure to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

Most assume that injuries will occur during student athletic, extracurricular, or recreational activities. Every instructor knows that students are injured during classes with physical exertion, but students and employees may also be injured in classroom activities.

Let's review the protocols for safely dealing with exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials:

- Barriers, such as latex or other protective gloves, should be used by care providers and during cleanup procedures.
- Skin wounds (such as scratches, abrasions, and lacerations) and potentially infectious skin lesions (such as weeping sores) should be securely covered with bandages or simple wraps to prevent leakage of blood or serous fluid.

- The injured student or employee should perform his or her own wound care whenever possible.
- Students and employees should be instructed not to handle other people's blood, unless properly handled. Students should not be asked to assist in controlling a bleeding injury (except in emergency situations), clean blood-contaminated surfaces (such as floors or wrestling mats), or handle contaminated laundry.
- Blood on the skin of the injured student or employee and on that of other students should be washed off thoroughly with soap and water or with premoistened towelettes. For band-aid-type injuries students or employees should be permitted to return to the activity only after the wound has been securely covered.
- If clothing or a wound bandage appears to be wet with blood or if blood has penetrated both sides of the fabric, the clothing should be changed and blood on the skin should be washed (by the injured student or employee) as soon as possible. Small amounts of dried blood on clothing or equipment do not constitute a risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens; therefore, a change of clothing may not be necessary.



- Skin contaminated with blood should be washed with soap and water. Although liquid chemical disinfectants effective against specific bloodborne pathogens and other micro-organisms are widely available, such disinfectants are not intended for direct contact with the skin.
- Disposable towelettes or towels should be used to clean all surfaces when blood is present. The surface should then be cleaned with germicide or a 10% household bleach solution.
- Even though bloodborne pathogens have not been shown to be transmitted by contact with saliva, you should not share towels, cups, and water bottles.

Student/Employee Follow-Up:

- When there has been a potential exposure to blood between two people (that is, another person's blood on someone's open sore or broken skin), follow the college's policy on reporting and notify the appropriate parties, parents as necessary, so that adequate medical follow-up can occur.

Dealing with the exposure to bloodborne pathogens should not be a problem. Students and employees should not become complacent and inadvertently expose each other to a bloodborne pathogen. Please remember that bloodborne pathogen infection, sometimes even when treated, may ultimately be fatal.

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