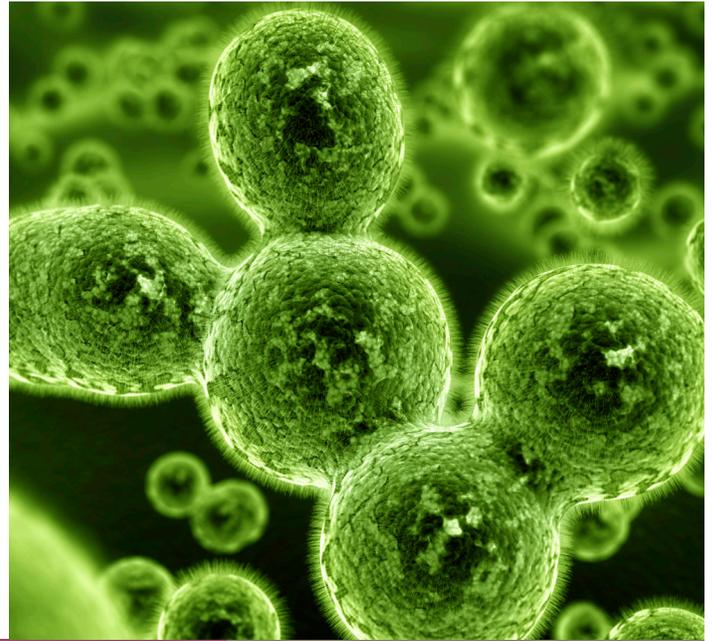


Taking Care to Avoid Bloodborne Pathogens



Bloodborne pathogens consist of a number of different infectious agents that can be transmitted through exposure to blood or other infectious body fluids from an infected individual to an uninfected person when the infectious agent enters the eyes, nose, mouth or through an opening in the skin. Depending on the setting, contaminated needles, sharps devices, and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) may contain pathogens, such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which all pose significant risk. One example of an OPIM would be body fluids with visible blood.

To help prevent and control exposure to these hazards, be sure to:

- Safely use and dispose of all types of sharps and needle devices.
 - **Safe use:** Use devices with safety features.
 - **Safe disposal:** Use a labeled, leak-proof, puncture-resistant container to dispose of sharps.
- Plan for unexpected movement by the care recipient.
- Watch for improperly discarded needles.
- Wear personal protective equipment, for instance: gloves, face mask, goggles, gown.
- Have a plan in place, if you have been exposed.

If you are exposed to blood or OPIM, take these actions:

- Wash needlesticks and cuts with soap and water.
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth or skin with water.
- Irrigate eyes with water or saline.
- Seek medical treatment.

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