

Cleaning-Up Blood Spills

Information for the General Public

The following guidelines apply to the clean-up of blood and body fluids including semen and vaginal secretions and any other body fluid that may contain blood (eg. vomit, diarrhea, urine). Exposures to blood and body fluids increase the risk of getting a blood-borne infection like hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV. It is possible for the viruses that cause these infections to get into the body through contact with open wounds or by splashing into the eyes, nose or mouth.

It is safest to assume that all blood and body fluids are capable of transmitting a blood-borne virus. The following steps are recommended whenever cleaning up blood or other body fluids.

Recommended steps for clean-up

Step 1- Wear disposable gloves during the entire cleaning and disinfecting process. If the chance of splashing exists, wear protective eyewear like safety glasses and cover your clothing with a full apron or gown.

Step 2- Dispose of any sharps (needles, razor blades, broken glass, lancets) in a sharps container if one is available. If no sharps container is available, place sharps in a hard plastic or metal container with a tight fitting lid. Label the container "biohazard".

Be careful when picking up sharps. Do not pick up sharps with your hands; keep a safe distance between you and the sharp object by using forceps, tweezers, thick cloth or newspapers to grasp the item(s). Hold the sharps part away from you.

Step 3- Soak up excess blood, vomit, feces, or other fluid with disposable towels (ie. paper towels). Throw away towels in a disposable plastic bag.

Step 4- Clean the area with soap and water.

Step 5- Flood the area with a freshly mixed bleach and water solution (1 part chlorine bleach to 9 parts water). Leave on surface for 10 minutes. Spraying is not recommended as it could cause the blood to splatter.

Step 6- Soak up the bleach solution with disposable towels. Place the used towels in the plastic bag. Inspect the blood spill area closely; making sure that the clean-up process is complete.

Step 7- Remove gloves and throw away in the plastic bag containing used disposable towels. Tie and place the bag with regular garbage. Throw away any extra bleach solution.

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Step 8- Wash hands immediately with soap and water.

Step 9- Make arrangements to dispose of sharps. Municipalities do not collect this type of hazardous waste so they cannot be placed in the garbage or recycling box. Sharps can be brought to the Middlesex-London Health Unit for disposal or dropped off at any needle exchange location.

Special Situations

- **Carpets**

If the blood spill is on a carpeted area, a bleach solution could cause damage to the carpet and may not be appropriate. Another disinfectant maybe required for these areas.

- **Bloodstained clothing and linen**

Bloodstained clothing and linen that is to be re-used should be handled with care. Wear gloves while touching the bloodstained items. Place items in plastic bags for safe storage and transportation for laundering. Wash using hot water and detergent.

- **Blood Exposure**

If you are exposed to someone else's blood or body fluids through injury with a sharp, a cut in the skin, or splash in the face, contact the Infectious Disease Control Team at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330, (after hours; 519-675-7523) to receive advice and counseling around the risks of blood borne diseases.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Infectious Disease Control Team at 519-663-5317 ext. 2330 or go to www.healthunit.com