

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS Precautions - Laboratories

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What should I know when employed in a laboratory?

Consider blood and body fluids from all patients as infective. Refer to [Routine Practices](#) for preventing transmission of bloodborne infectious diseases.

Report immediately suspect fluid exposure, or a needlestick or sharp injury to a designated person or health care professional.

Please also see the OSH Answers document [HIV/AIDS in the Workplace](#) for more information.

What personal protection should I wear?

Wear gloves:

- when processing blood or body fluid specimens
- when handling contaminated articles
- during cleaning and decontamination procedures

Change gloves after processing specimen.

Wear gowns while working with potentially infectious material.

Wear masks and protective eye wear:

- if mucous membrane contact is likely
- if there is potential for splashing

Remove protective clothing before leaving laboratory.

Wash hands:

- after processing specimens
- after completing laboratory activities
- after removing protective clothing
- after a glove tear or suspected glove leak
- before leaving laboratory

Do not pipette by mouth.

What precautions should I follow when working with needles and sharps?

- Use needles only when there is no alternative. Consider [needles and sharp](#) instruments as being infected.
 - Use puncture-resistant containers. Label containers – for example "CAUTION: WASTE SHARPS".
 - Clean and sterilize reusable syringes before reusing.
 - Do not recap, bend, break or remove needles by hand from disposable syringes or otherwise handle after use.
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When should I decontaminate laboratory materials and surfaces?

Laboratory surfaces should be decontaminated:

- After a spill of blood or body fluid. Disinfect with a medical grade disinfectant.
 - Before reprocessing contaminated material used in lab tests.
 - When work activities have been completed.
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How should I dispose and transport contaminated laboratory test material?

- Place contaminated laboratory test material in bags and dispose according to policy for infectious waste.
 - Put specimen into a sturdy container with secure lid to prevent leaking.
 - Avoid contaminating outside of container and accompanying laboratory form.
 - Place container in a clear, impervious plastic bag.
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