

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Laboratory Specific Precautions

Personal Protective Equipment

As a general reminder, please ensure that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used for all patient interactions involving contact with blood or bodily fluids.

1. All healthcare workers should routinely use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucous-membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids of any patient is anticipated.
2. Gloves should be worn for touching blood and body fluids, mucous membranes, or non-intact skin of all patients, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures.
3. Gloves should be changed after contact with each patient.
4. Masks and protective eyewear or face shields should be worn during procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or other body fluids to prevent exposure of mucous membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes.
5. Gowns or aprons should be worn during procedures that are likely to generate splashes of blood or other body fluids.
6. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids.
7. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
8. All health-care workers should take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices during procedures; when cleaning used instruments; during disposal of used needles; and when handling sharp instruments after procedures.
 - a. To prevent needle stick injuries, needles should not be recapped, purposely bent or broken by hand, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. After they are used, disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items should be placed in puncture-resistant containers for disposal; the puncture-resistant containers should be located as close as practical to the use area. Large-bore reusable needles should be placed in a puncture-resistant container for transport to the reprocessing area.

Laboratory Specific Precautions

1. All specimens of blood and body fluids should be put in a well-constructed container with a secure lid to prevent leaking during transport. Care should be taken when collecting each specimen to avoid contaminating the outside of the container and of the laboratory form accompanying the specimen.
2. All persons processing blood and body-fluid specimens (e.g., removing tops from vacuum tubes) should wear gloves.
3. Masks and protective eyewear should be worn if mucous-membrane contact with blood or body fluids is anticipated.
4. Gloves should be changed and hands washed after completion of specimen processing.
5. Laboratory work surfaces should be decontaminated with an appropriate chemical germicide after a spill of blood or other body fluids and when work activities are completed.
6. Contaminated materials used in laboratory tests should be decontaminated before reprocessing or be placed in bags and disposed of in accordance with institutional policies for disposal of infective waste.
7. All persons should wash their hands after completing laboratory activities and should remove protective clothing before leaving the laboratory.