

What You Should Know  
if You Have Come into  
Contact with  
**BLOOD OR BODY FLUIDS**

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**Manitoba** 

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**Infections like HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), hepatitis B and hepatitis C can be spread to you (the Exposed) if you come in contact with an infected person's blood or body fluids (the Source).**

### **What should I do immediately if I come into contact with another person's blood or body fluids?**

If you are poked with a needle, or cut with an instrument that was used on another person:

- Let your wound bleed freely to clean it. Don't squeeze it.
- Wash your wound gently with soap and water.
- If body fluids splash into your eyes, wash them with lots of water.
- If contact occurs in your workplace, tell your supervisor immediately.
- If contact occurs in the community, call your health care provider or call Health Links-Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 immediately.

**The greatest chance of getting an infection is when fresh blood or body fluid from an infected person gets into you through a poke, cut, or open area on your skin.**

While the greatest chance of infection is contact with infected blood, other body fluids that could be infectious are:

- semen and vaginal secretions
- fluids that are around the brain, spinal cord, joints, lungs and heart
- urine, vomit or saliva that contains visible traces of blood

## Contact with infected blood and body fluids can happen if you:

- get poked with a needle that was used on another person
- get cut with a sharp instrument that was used on another person
- share needles, razors, toothbrushes, etc.
- have sex (including oral, vaginal and/or anal sex)
- get splashed with blood or body fluids
- get bitten by another person

## What are my risks of infection after contact?

Your risk of infection depends on the:

- type of contact
- type of infection
- amount of blood or body fluid that gets into your body
- amount of virus in the Source's blood (at the time of contact)

## If you get poked with a needle or cut with an instrument and the person has...

HIV	Your risk is about 1 in 333 (0.3%)
Hepatitis B	There is no risk IF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you have had 3 injections of hepatitis B vaccine in the past, or</li><li>• you have had hepatitis B infection in the past, but a blood test shows you no longer have it</li></ul> Your risk is about 1 in 3 to 1 in 16 (6 to 30%) IF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you have not had the vaccine or hepatitis B infection in the past</li></ul>
Hepatitis C	Your risk is about 1 in 55 (1.8%)

## If you get blood or body fluid splashed in your eyes, nose or mouth and the person has...

HIV	Your risk is very small
Hepatitis B	Your risk is small
Hepatitis C	Your risk is very small

## Should I get tested for infections such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C?

Testing is strongly recommended if there is contact with a body fluid that may be infected.

- Both you and the person whose blood and body fluids you come into contact with should be tested. This may help decide what treatment you need.
- Testing is voluntary\*. You and the other person must give consent before testing is done\*. Both people have the right to refuse testing.\*
- You should be tested immediately, then again in six weeks to three months, and a third time, six months after contact with blood or body fluid.

\* Except when the Source's test has been ordered by law (*The Testing of Bodily Fluids and Disclosure Act*).

## Is testing confidential?

**Yes. All information and test results will be kept confidential.\***

\*Except when the Source's test has been ordered by law (*The Testing of Bodily Fluids and Disclosure Act*). In this case, the Source's test results will be provided to your health care provider.

## What should I do during the follow-up period?

If you become infected from contact with blood or body fluid, you can pass the infection to others if they come in contact with your blood or body fluids. Take the precautions listed on the next page to prevent transmitting infection to others.

## For at least six months, or for the length of time your health care provider tells you:

- Do not let others get your blood or body fluids on them. If they do, they should follow instructions in the section “What should I do immediately if I come into contact with another person’s blood or body fluids?” (see page 1)
- Tell your sexual partners they could be at risk. Use latex condoms during sex (including oral, vaginal and/or anal sex).
- Do not get pregnant.
- Do not share a razor, toothbrush, nail file or tweezers.
- Do not donate blood, semen, organs and tissues.
- Stop breastfeeding until you talk with your health care provider.
- See your health care provider if you get any of the following symptoms during the next six months:
  - fever
  - rash
  - jaundice (yellow eyes or skin)
  - nausea (upset stomach)
  - sore throat
  - reduced appetite
  - vomiting (throwing up)
  - fatigue (tiredness)
  - swollen lymph nodes
  - muscle aches

Type of Infection	What is it?
HIV	HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). This virus damages the immune system, which protects you against infections.
Hepatitis B	It is a virus that infects the liver. It is different than hepatitis A and C, but similar in that all three affect the liver.
Hepatitis C	It is a virus that infects the liver. It is a different virus than hepatitis A and B.
What are the symptoms?	
HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A person can have HIV for many years with no symptoms.</li> <li>• As the immune system weakens, a person becomes sick more often from germs the person is in contact with day-to-day.</li> <li>• AIDS is the last stage of the HIV infection.</li> <li>• People who have AIDS become more and more sick and may die.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people who get hepatitis B never feel sick and they recover completely.</li> <li>• Other people have a short illness. They feel tired and lose their appetite. Their skin and/or eyes turn yellow (jaundice).</li> <li>• A very small number of people get very ill and die.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people who have hepatitis C have no symptoms and they feel healthy for years.</li> <li>• Other people feel tired, have joint pain or don't feel like eating.</li> <li>• Some people get yellow skin and eyes (jaundice).</li> </ul>
What are the complications?	
HIV	This virus damages the immune system, which protects a person from infections. People with HIV do not have this protection. They can get many different infections and may die from these infections.
Hepatitis B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of all the adults who become infected with hepatitis B, 90% recover and 10% develop chronic hepatitis. People with chronic hepatitis are called carriers.</li> <li>• Of all people with chronic hepatitis B infection, 15% to 25% will die of liver cancer or scarring (cirrhosis) later on in life.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis C	<p>In most cases, people who have hepatitis C get a chronic infection. This causes symptoms for years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The worst effect is scarring and severe damage to the liver (cirrhosis).</li> <li>• A small number of people may get liver cancer.</li> </ul>

	<b>How is it spread?</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<p>The virus is spread when blood, semen or vaginal fluids from an infected person enters another person's body. This can happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by accidentally poking yourself with a used needle</li> <li>• by sharing drug snorting or injection equipment such as needles and syringes</li> <li>• by having unprotected sex with an infected person</li> <li>• at the time of birth. A pregnant woman can infect her baby.</li> <li>• by sharing a toothbrush or razor</li> </ul> <p>People who had a blood transfusion in Canada before 1985 may have been infected.</p>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	<p>Nearly half of the people who have hepatitis B never feel sick. They can spread the disease without knowing it. It is spread when blood or body fluids from an infected person enter another person's body. This can happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by accidentally poking yourself with a used needle</li> <li>• by sharing drug snorting or injection equipment such as needles and syringes</li> <li>• by having unprotected sex with an infected person</li> <li>• at the time of birth. A pregnant woman can infect her baby.</li> <li>• by living in a house with other people who have hepatitis B</li> <li>• by sharing a toothbrush or razor</li> </ul> <p>People who had a blood transfusion in Canada before 1970 may have been infected.</p>
<b>Hepatitis C</b>	<p>The virus is spread most often by direct contact with the blood of an infected person. This can happen by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accidentally poking yourself with a used needle</li> <li>• sharing drug snorting or injection equipment such as needles and syringes</li> <li>• sharing a toothbrush or razor</li> </ul> <p>People who had a blood transfusion in Canada before April 1992 may have been infected.</p>
	<b>Is there treatment?</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<p>There is no cure for HIV infection or AIDS at this time. The virus remains in the body for life. There are drugs available that slow down the progress of the virus. None of them are a cure.</p>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>	<p>Yes. Treatment can help some people with chronic hepatitis B.</p>
<b>Hepatitis C</b>	<p>Yes. Treatment can help some people with hepatitis C.</p>

## Is there treatment to prevent getting HIV, hepatitis B or C, if exposed?

There is some treatment to prevent getting infected. The need for preventive treatment depends on:

- whether or not the Source is known
- if the Source was tested and the results are known
- the type of exposure

The health care provider will decide this with you. If you are exposed, the best time to see a health care provider is within two hours of the exposure.

The table below has more information about prevention treatments. Once further assessment is made, your health care provider may recommend some, or all, of these treatments.

Type of Infection	Preventive Treatment
HIV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no vaccine to prevent HIV infection.</li> <li>• In some cases, certain medicines, if taken very soon after you have been exposed to blood or body fluids, may prevent infection. These need to be started within 2 to 4 hours of exposure and are usually taken for 28 days.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis B	<p>If you are immune*: no further treatment is needed.</p> <p>*A person can become immune when they get three injections of hepatitis B vaccine, or if they had hepatitis B infection in the past and recovered. A blood test can tell if you are immune.</p> <p>If you are <b>NOT immune</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)</b> should be given within 48 hours, but can be given up to seven days after exposure.</li> <li>• The first dose of <b>hepatitis B vaccine</b> should be given at the same time as HBIG, but at a different site on the body. The second dose should be given one month after exposure. The third dose should be given six months after exposure.</li> </ul>
Hepatitis C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.</li> <li>• There is no treatment that will prevent infection.</li> <li>• If you become positive for hepatitis C, early treatment may prevent chronic infection.</li> </ul>

## Medicines that reduce the risk of HIV infection

### Why take these medicines?

- Your risk of infection from the HIV virus after contact with blood and certain body fluids depends on many things, including the type of exposure and amount of body fluid.
- Early drug treatment may prevent the infection. If treatment is delayed, the infection may not be prevented but may be less severe.

### When should I start taking the medicine?

- The effectiveness of the treatment is affected by the length of time between the exposure and when you start taking the medicine.
- If possible, treatment should start within two to four hours after the possible exposure to HIV.
- In all cases, treatment must start within 72 hours following the possible exposure to HIV.

### How do I get these medicines?

If you and the health care provider decide that medicine is necessary, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living will provide a “starter kit” to you at no charge. The starter kit contains a five day supply of medicine. This will help you start the treatment quickly. More information on the medicines is included in the starter kits.

### How long do I need to take these medicines?

The usual treatment is 28 days. When the test results are ready, your health care provider will tell you if you need to finish 28 days of treatment. He or she will provide you with a prescription for the rest of the medicines.

## **What if I miss or vomit (throw up) a dose?**

If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. Do not take two doses within six hours.

If you do not remember until it's time for the next dose, just take this dose. Do not take two doses at once.

If you miss more than three doses in a row or miss doses often, contact your health care provider.

If you vomit (throw up) a dose of medicine within 30 minutes of taking it, repeat the dose. If this happens more than twice, contact your health care provider.

## **Treatment that reduces the risk of hepatitis B infection**

### **Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)**

#### **What is Hepatitis B Immune Globulin (HBIG)?**

HBIG is made of antibodies against hepatitis B. Antibodies are proteins in the blood that our immune system makes to fight germs after we have been exposed to them.

#### **Why is HBIG needed?**

HBIG gives you immediate protection against the virus and lasts for several months. HBIG should be given as soon as possible after an exposure to hepatitis B. After contact with blood or body fluids, if HBIG is given at the same time as the hepatitis B vaccine, infection is prevented in 75% of people.

#### **How is HBIG given?**

HBIG is given by injection (needle) into the arm or buttock. In young children, it is injected into the thigh muscle. It is usually given at the same time as the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine, but at a different site on the body.

## **Hepatitis B Vaccine**

### **What is hepatitis B vaccine?**

It is a vaccine that stops a person from becoming infected with hepatitis B. The vaccine will only help people who do not already have hepatitis. Hepatitis B vaccine is very effective. Over 95% of people vaccinated are protected against the hepatitis B virus.

### **Why is hepatitis B vaccine given?**

Hepatitis B vaccine gives long term protection against the virus. The protection usually lasts for many years.

### **How is the vaccine given?**

It is given by injection (needle) into the muscle of the arm or leg. Three doses of the vaccine must be given over a six month time period if someone has been in contact with infected blood or body fluids:

Dose # 1 – is given immediately, ideally within 48 hours, but may be given up to seven days after contact

Dose # 2 – is given one month after initial contact

Dose # 3 – is given six months after initial contact

**For more information about HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C,  
contact your health care provider or call: Health Links -- Info Santé at  
788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.**