

Measures to prevent infectious diseases transmissible by blood

1. Background

This leaflet is aimed at persons in the DBMR who work with blood and other body fluids, especially laboratory personnel and cleaning service staff.

Infectious diseases, pathogens of which are contained in the blood, can be transmitted by blood or other body fluids which contain blood: e.g. through stab wounds, cuts, splashes into the eyes and onto the mucous membranes of the mouth as well as through contact with broken skin (open wounds).

Blood and body fluids containing blood must always be regarded as infectious!

The only people who work **in working areas with a high risk of infection** are those who have been instructed about possible dangers from infectious diseases in the course of their work, measures to prevent exposure, hygiene regulations, the wearing and use of protective equipment and protective clothing, and action in the event of incidents. Stab wounds and cuts are prevented by technical means and appropriate equipment.

Employees who, on the basis of experience, are exposed to a higher risk of stab wounds and cuts from items contaminated with blood or who have foreseeable contact with blood are **inoculated against hepatitis B** in the DBMR.

2. Rules of conduct for laboratory personnel

To protect yourself and others (especially laboratory personnel and cleaning staff) against infectious diseases which can be transmitted through blood, **the following basic rules of conduct** must be followed:

- Avoid stab wounds and cuts: only place protective covers over used cannulae if absolutely necessary, preferably using a mechanical aid or the one-handed technique, but never with both hands (no two-handed recapping).
- Items contaminated with blood which pose a risk of injury (e.g. used cannulae and sharp disposable utensils) must be disposed of in unbreakable, puncture-resistant and closable containers. Hand over the containers for disposal no more than 2/3 full, tightly closed and marked as a biohazard.
- Disposable gloves are to be worn for activities involving possible contact with blood or body fluids. When disposing of the gloves, turn them inside-out, so the outside, contaminated glove surface is on the inside. Wash and moisturize hands.
- Always wear eye protection and a respirator when carrying out tasks which could cause splashes.
- Disinfect and/or sterilize protective clothing and other material which might be contaminated.

3. Rules of conduct for the cleaning staff

People entrusted with cleaning duties should be informed about the dangers of stab wounds and cuts. In particular, these people must be instructed that any refuse bag could contain items/instruments capable of piercing or cutting and that appropriate precautions must be taken when disposing of refuse bags:

- Never press waste bags down by hand.
- When emptying waste bins, never put bare hands or even hands protected by gloves into the bins.
- Only grasp waste bags near to the closure. Waste bins without a liner must be emptied by being tipped over.
- Wear liquid-proof protective gloves and dispose of them after work – then wash hands thoroughly and moisturize them.

4. Action following an incident with possible transmission of infection

The following immediate action should be taken **after an incident with possible transmission of infection**:

- Wash hands and contaminated areas of skin immediately with soap and water and/or disinfect them.
- If the eyes or mucous membranes have been in contact with blood or with body fluids containing blood, rinse them immediately with plenty of water or a physiological liquid.
- In the event of an incident in which there is a risk of infection through blood (stab wound, cut, splash onto a mucous membrane or contact between blood and open, injured skin), proceed according to *Emergency planning: action in the event of incidents in the laboratory*.
- Report stab wounds, cuts and splashes¹ to the managers and Biosafety Officers without delay using the *Report sheet for laboratory incidents*.

Contact your line managers in the event of any uncertainty or if you have any questions.

COMPILED / AUTHORIZED	François Achermann, Safety DBMR
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¹ Regarded as an accident according to Art. 9 of the Ordinance governing the prevention of accidents and occupational diseases (Verordnung vom 19. Dezember 1983 über die Verhütung von Unfällen und Berufskrankheiten / VUV) and must therefore be reported to the accident insurance fund.