

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

What are Standard Precautions?

[Standard Precautions](#) are the basic level of infection control that should be used by all individuals in contact with others, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status in any setting where care is delivered. Use of Standard Precautions reduces the risk of transmission of microorganisms that can cause disease. Standard Precautions should be used whenever there might be contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, and excretions (except sweat), whether or not they contain visible blood, non-intact skin and mucous membranes.

What are the elements of Standard Precautions?

Standard Precautions include the following elements:

1. Hand Hygiene
2. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
3. Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette
4. Sharps Safety
5. Clean and Disinfect Environmental Surfaces.

1. [Hand Hygiene](#)

Handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent infection. Use of hand sanitizer is an acceptable alternative but should not be used when hands are visibly soiled.

Hands should be washed several times daily with soap and water, including:

- Before and after physical contact with a student
- After contact with used equipment
- After contact with blood or body fluids
- After touching the mouth or nose
- Immediately after removing gloves
- Before and after eating
- After using the restroom or assisting in the restroom
- After handling animals

2. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE is equipment that protects you from contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM). The appropriate type of protective equipment varies with the task and degree of anticipated exposure. Whenever PPE is being used, the user should follow the correct order of [Donning and Doffing PPE](#). In times of shortages, follow the [CDC/NIOSH](#) strategies for conserving supplies of PPE.

- Disposable Gloves

- Shall be worn when it can be reasonably anticipated that the employee may have contact with blood, mucous membranes, non-intact skin or other potentially infectious materials; and when handling or touching contaminated items or surfaces.
 - Shall be replaced as soon as possible when contaminated or as soon as feasible if they are torn, punctured, or when they no longer function as a barrier.
 - Shall not be washed or decontaminated for re-use. Used gloves should be discarded in the regular trash.
- Removal of Disposable Gloves
 - Assume entire outside of glove is contaminated.
 - Do not touch surfaces such as doorknobs, phones, or yourself with contaminated gloves.
 - Remove first glove by grasping outside of wrist area with gloved fingertips and peeling glove off hand.
 - Insert one or more fingers from ungloved hand into inside wrist of remaining glove. Peel glove off, turning inside out as you go.
 - Dispose of both gloves in regular trash container.
 - Always wash your hands after glove removal.
- Masks/Respirator (Surgical/N-95)
 - Masks (Surgical/N-95) should be worn by health office staff when interacting with staff and students during high community transmission of respiratory illnesses. N-95 masks should be fit tested.
 - Masks (Surgical) should also be placed on students that are unable to cover their cough or are otherwise symptomatic with a respiratory infection.
- Protective clothing (gowns)
 - Protective clothing to prevent or reduce soiling of staff clothing or skin should be selected based on the degree of protection necessary for the anticipated task, the area of the body needing cover, and the type and amount of body fluids.
 - Protective clothing should be laundered or disposed of after each care session.
- Eyewear/goggles/face shields
 - Decrease the risk of eye contamination by splashing or spraying of blood and body fluids.
 - Should be worn if splashing of body fluids is likely to occur.
- Barriers

- Cuts and abrasions on the hands and forearms should be covered with a bandage before any contact with others.
- Should be used to cover any work surfaces if drainage or splashing with blood or body fluids is anticipated.
- Dispose of after use.

3. Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette

To prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections, the following measures should be implemented at the first point of contact with a potentially infected person.

- Visual Alerts: Each health office should have the following posted:
 - Cover Your Cough
Tips to prevent the spread of germs from coughing
 - Information about Personal Protective Equipment
Demonstrates the sequences for donning and removing personal protective equipment
- Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette: The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
 - Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
 - Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic handwash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.
- Masking and Separation of Persons with Respiratory Symptoms:
 - During periods of increased respiratory infection activity in the community/increased absenteeism in schools, offer masks to persons who are coughing.
 - Either procedure masks or surgical masks may be used to contain respiratory secretions (respirators such as N-95 or above are not necessary for this purpose).
 - When space and chair availability permit, encourage coughing persons to sit at least three feet away from others in the health office.

4. Sharps Safety

Needles, blades, and other sharp instruments should be placed directly into a rigid red sharps container. Never recap, bend or break needles. Activate needle safety devices when available. Discard needle and syringe as one unit into sharps container (e.g. Epinephrine Autoinjectors).

- Most sharps injuries are caused by placing the cap back on the needle.
- For the disposal of filled sharps containers follow the [MERI Biohazard Disposal System](#) procedure.

5. [Clean and Disinfect Environmental Spaces](#): Each health office will be cleaned and disinfected daily by building custodians. In addition, health office staff should assure additional cleaning and disinfecting is done per the guideline. Additional items to consider:

- **Laundry contaminated with blood and body fluids should be handled as little as possible.**
 - Gloves must be worn when handling contaminated laundry.
 - Contaminated laundry shall be bagged or placed in containers at the location where it was used and shall not be sorted or rinsed.
 - Laundry container must be leak-proof if there is reasonable likelihood of soak-through or leakage.
 - All contaminated laundry shall be placed and transported in bags or containers that are biohazard-labeled or colored red.
 - Put student's clothing soiled with blood or body fluids in a plastic bag before sending home.
 - Wash contaminated laundry with ½ cup of bleach and detergent at 160 degrees Fahrenheit for a total of 25 minutes.
 - Contaminated laundry that is to be sent to a commercial establishment for cleaning shall also meet the above requirements for biohazard material labeling.

- **Books, magazines and toys**

In general, any of these articles visibly soiled with blood or other potentially infectious material should be disinfected or destroyed.

- Use similar guidelines as when cleaning up body fluid spills.

- **CPR**

- If it is necessary for you to perform CPR, use a pocket mask. If pocket mask unavailable, Chest-Compression-Only CPR is acceptable.
 - Pocket mask is located in the supply pouch stored in AED Cabinet.

- **Diaper Changing**

- Correct diapering procedures are required to prevent the spread of infectious materials in the stool.
 - Gloves should be worn for diapering.
 - Diapers do not need to be discarded in red bags.
 - Refer to Diaper procedure, [10.2040](#).

- **Blood or Body Fluid Spills**

- Spills of small amounts of blood or body fluids containing blood should be immediately cleaned using [CLEANING BODY FLUID SPILLS](#) guideline. Large spills should be cleaned by the custodial staff.
 - Wear gloves.
 - Clean up spill with paper towels.

- Use hydrogen peroxide cleaner solution first.
- Use disinfectant cleaner next and follow recommended kill time.
- Dispose of gloves, soiled towels, and other waste in the trash.
- **Disposal of trash**
 - Trash that is saturated with blood or other potentially infectious body fluids is placed in a red bag with a biohazard label for proper disposal
 - Discarded menstrual products do not need to be placed in red bags.
 - Red bags are located in the school health office.

References

CDC: Standard Precautions for All Patient Care (2016). Retrieved June 19, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/standard-precautions.html>

DHS: Infection Control and Prevention - Standard Precautions. (2022). Retrieved June 19, 2023, from <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ic/precautions.htm>