

# First aid & standard precautions



FACTSHEET 11

Hepatitis Council of Qld



Being blood aware doesn't mean having to be fanatical about avoiding contact with other people's blood. It simply means **taking reasonable steps to reduce the overall chance** of being exposed to viruses

## What are standard precautions?

Standard precautions are basic levels of infection control and risk minimisation. The basic principle of infection control around blood borne viruses is to treat all blood as potentially infectious. There is no need for additional precautions for hepatitis-positive people when standard infection control measures are in place.

### Standard precautions include:

- Good hygiene practices;
- Hand washing;
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE);
- The correct handling and disposal of sharps and other potentially infectious waste;
- Routine cleaning;
- Immunisation for healthcare workers.

## Being blood aware

*Blood awareness* applies when dealing with blood or other body fluid accidents, whether the people involved are known to have hepatitis or not.

- Your skin is your 'first line of defense' against infections. Make sure you have no uncovered cuts, abrasions or dermatitis when giving first aid;
- Wear disposable gloves when dealing with

- any blood or other bodily fluids;
- Disposable materials (e.g. paper towels) should be used when cleaning up blood or other bodily fluid spills or splashes;
- Any surfaces which have had blood or other bodily fluid splashes should be cleaned with detergent and water;
- Vaccination against infections such as hepatitis A and B are important;
- When giving resuscitation in the event of a first aid emergency, use safe practices (such as using a mouth shield).

## What should I do if I have to give first aid?

It is important to remember that hepatitis B and C are blood-borne viruses, and are not passed on through general contact between people. You cannot get hepatitis B or C from saliva, tears or sweat. When giving first aid, it is important to be blood aware:

- Cover any cuts, abrasions or dermatitis you may have;
- Wear disposable gloves;
- Use a mouth shield if giving resuscitation.

### Steps to take before giving first aid

Wash hands using soap and warm water (this helps break down oils on your skin which can trap germs and viruses more easily)



Cover any cuts or scratches on your skin using a bandage or dressing (e.g. a Band-Aid)



Put on disposable gloves

*The ABC of Hepatitis Training Package is an initiative of Queensland Health through funding provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing under the National Hepatitis C Prevention and Education Initiative*

Updated: 3 April 2009

For more information [www.hepqld.asn.au](http://www.hepqld.asn.au)  
or Hepatitis Council of Qld info line 1800 648 491

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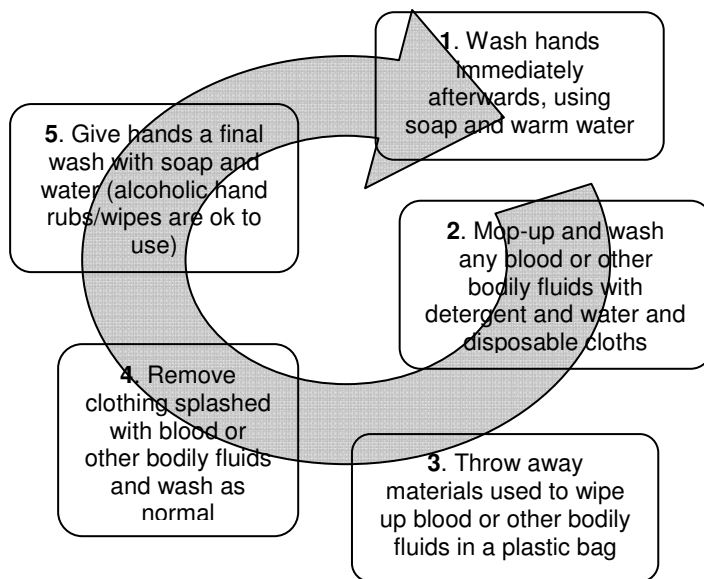
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## Steps to take after giving first aid



## Interested in finding out more?

### Factsheets

- 02 Hepatitis C blood tests: antibodies and PCR
- 07 Disclosure and confidentiality
- 08 Discrimination and hepatitis
- 09 Needle stick injury and syringe disposal
- 15 The workplace and hepatitis
- 16 Hepatitis A, B & C: a comparison

### Organisations

- Queensland Health Infection Control  
[www.health.qld.gov.au/infectioncontrol/](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/infectioncontrol/)
- Queensland Government Department of Workplace Health and Safety  
Phone 1300 369 915  
[www.whs.qld.gov.au](http://www.whs.qld.gov.au)

## What should I do if I come into contact with blood or body fluids?

- Wash the blood or other body fluids away as soon as possible—use soap and water if available;
- Rinse away any blood or body fluids from the eyes, nose and mouth with plenty of water;
- Any cuts or scratches should be washed with soapy water, encouraged to bleed (squeeze the cut) and covered with a sterile dressing (e.g. a plaster);
- Any accidental exposures in the workplace should be reported;
- Seek medical advice from a GP or hospital (post-exposure prophylaxis is available for people who have been exposed to hepatitis B).

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