

FIRST AID AND STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Being blood aware

Being blood aware doesn't mean having to be fanatical about avoiding contact with other people's blood. Blood awareness applies when dealing with bloody or other body spills or accidents, whether the people involved are known to have Hepatitis or not.

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.

What are standard precautions?

Standard precautions include the following:

- 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

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

It is important to remember that Hepatitis B and C 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:

- Your skin is your 'first line of defence' against infections. Make sure you have no uncovered cuts, abrasions or dermatitis.

- 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.
- When giving resuscitation in the event of a first aid emergency, use safe practices (such as using a mouth shield).
- Seek medical advice from a GP or local hospital if exposed to blood. If you are not vaccinated for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis B immunoglobulin (HBIG) is available if you have been exposed to hepatitis B, and post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is available if you have been exposed to HIV.

Interested in finding out more?

- Talk to your GP
- Visit the Queensland Health website
- Contact Hepatitis Queensland on our **Infoline 1800 437 222** or visit **www.hepqld.asn.au**