

# Infection Prevention & Control: Fact Sheet #1

## Routine Practices

### What does Routine Practices Mean?

Routine Practices are activities that you do or barriers that you wear to help reduce your risk of being exposed to blood, body fluids and non-intact (broken) skin of other people. By following Routine Practices you help protect yourself and others from diseases that can be spread from person to person.

It is important that these practices are always used correctly. Incorrect use of these practices may increase the risk of infection to yourselves and others.

### What are Routine Practices?

1. Handwashing
2. Wearing gloves when there is potential to be exposed to blood and body fluids
3. Properly cleaning up blood and body fluid spills
4. Making sure your Immunizations are up to date
5. Using face protection like masks and goggles if there is a potential to being splashed with blood or body fluids
6. Handling sharps safely

### Handwashing

Handwashing is a simple but effective way to prevent infections. Hands should be washed any time you have contact with another person's blood, body fluids or broken skin. Hands can be washed using regular soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### Gloves

Gloves should be worn if you will touch someone else's blood, body fluids or broken skin. Gloves should also be worn if you are going to clean up a spill of blood or body fluids. Gloves should be removed and put in the garbage after you have completed your task. **ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER USING GLOVES!**

## **Cleaning up a spill**

We wash our hands when we become exposed to blood or body fluids. It is just as important for us to clean surfaces that have been contaminated with these as well. Follow these steps when cleaning up a blood or body fluid spill:

1. Put on a pair of household rubber gloves
2. Clean up the spill using paper or disposable towel and place it in a plastic bag
3. Wash the surface with a house hold cleaner
4. Wipe the surface with a fresh solution of bleach (50ml bleach to 450ml water or ¼ cup of bleach to 2 ¼ cups of water)
5. Leave the bleach solution in contact with the surface for at least 10 minutes. This will kill any germs left on the surface.
6. Wipe up the bleach solution with more paper towels
7. Dispose of the used paper towels and gloves in a plastic garbage bag
- 8. WASH YOUR HANDS**

You can use a regular household cleaning product to clean surfaces that have not come in contact with blood or body fluids. It is important that you follow the manufacturer's directions to make sure it is most effective.

## **Face Protection**

Face protection includes safety goggles and masks. Face protection is needed if you are doing an activity where there might be a splash of blood or body fluids to your face or eyes.

## **Sharps**

Sometimes you may come across a "sharp" in a public area. Sharps that you may find include used needles, broken glass or used razors. These can cause an infection if you come in contact with them and they have been contaminated with blood or body fluids.

If you find a sharp in a public area...**NEVER PICK IT UP WITH YOUR BARE HANDS!** Block off the area where the sharp is located and contact: Your local municipal services or band office for clean up.

**If you are poked or cut by the sharp, immediately wash the area with soap and water; go to your local health centre or emergency department as soon as possible. Let them know you were cut by a contaminated sharp.**

If you need to dispose of your own sharps at home, make sure you put them into a puncture resistant container first. Never overfill this container and make sure it is closed securely before disposal.

### **Immunizations**

Immunizations stimulate your body to produce protective antibodies or “fighter cells” to certain diseases. When you are exposed to the disease after you have been immunized, you have already built up protection to that disease and you will not get sick or as sick from it as you would if you had not been immunized.

Make sure you and your family are up to date with the vaccines provided for free here in the Northwest Territories. Check with your employer. Depending on where you work, it may be required that you have additional vaccines. Additional vaccines may also be required if you are travelling to an area outside of Canada.

You can book an appointment to get your vaccines updated at your local health centre or public health office.

### **For further information:**

Visit the Department of Health and Social Services Website at [www.hltss.gov.nt.ca](http://www.hltss.gov.nt.ca).