

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Whether or not you work directly with patients, you need to protect yourself from exposure to pathogens (disease-causing germs). Knowing how infections are spread will help you prevent them.

Standard Precautions have been developed to minimize the risk of disease transmission for those whose activities may bring them into contact with potential infections. This is recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Definitions:

Standard Precautions: The routine and consistent use of appropriate barrier protection to prevent transmission of microorganisms resulting from contact with blood and body substances, and as part of the practice of general hygiene. The most important practice is to treat ALL blood and body fluid as if it was infectious.

“IF IT’S WET AND NOT YOURS, DON’T TOUCH IT,
AND DON’T LET IT TOUCH YOU!”

Exposure Control: Since you may not always know whose blood is carrying infectious germs, treat all blood/body fluids as potentially infectious. Appropriate personal protective equipment will be worn as needed: mask, eye protection, gloves, gown, etc., when there is a likelihood of coming in contact with wet body substances. If you have a question as to what protective equipment is needed, always ask a staff member.

Standard Precautions include:

- Gloves, gowns, mask, and goggles.
- Handwashing or alcohol hand rub – wash hands or use alcohol hand rub between contact with each patient and before coming in or leaving the department. Always wash your hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or the time it takes to sing the alphabet song) before eating, after using the restroom, when hands are visibly soiled and anytime you feel you may have come in contact with infectious items/fluids.
- All specimens are to be in sealed plastic bags and clearly labeled.
- Observe warning or precautions on patient doors or in rooms.
- Do not clean possible infectious spills, contact housekeeping to do so, but stay with spill to prevent further contact by anyone else.