

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS Precautions - Laboratories

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What should I know when employed in a laboratory?

Consider blood and body fluids from all patients as infective. Refer to [Routine Practices](#) for preventing transmission of bloodborne infectious diseases.

Report immediately to a designated person or health care professional any suspected fluid exposure or a needlestick or sharp injury.

Please also see the OSH Answers documents [HIV/AIDS in the Workplace](#) and [Needlestick and Sharps Injuries](#) for more information.

What personal protection should I wear?

Wear gloves:

- when processing blood or body fluid specimens
- when handling contaminated articles
- during cleaning and decontamination procedures

Change gloves after processing a specimen.

Wear gowns while working with potentially infectious material.

Wear masks and protective eyewear:

- if mucous membrane contact is likely
- if there is potential for splashing

Remove protective clothing before leaving the laboratory.

Wash hands:

- after processing specimens
- after completing laboratory activities
- after removing protective clothing
- after a glove tear or suspected glove leak
- before leaving laboratory

Do not pipette by mouth.

Please also see the OSH Answers document [Personal Protective Equipment](#) for more information.

What precautions should I follow when working with needles and sharps?

- Use needles only when there is no alternative. Consider [needles and sharp](#) instruments as being infected.
- Use puncture-resistant containers. Label containers – for example "CAUTION: WASTE SHARPS".
- Clean and sterilize reusable syringes before reusing them.
- Do not recap, bend, break or remove needles by hand from disposable syringes or otherwise handle after use.
- Familiarize yourself with the type(s) of needles used in your workplace
- Dispose of sharps containers according to the manufacturer's instructions. Replace and seal the existing sharps disposal container closed when about three-fourths (3/4) full or at the max fill line, indicating the container is full.
- Do not open, empty, or manually clean full sharps disposal containers.

When should I decontaminate laboratory materials and surfaces?

Laboratory surfaces should be decontaminated:

- After a spill of blood or body fluid. Disinfect with a medical-grade disinfectant.
 - Before reprocessing contaminated material used in lab tests.
 - When work activities have been completed.
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How should I dispose of and transport contaminated laboratory test material?

- Place contaminated laboratory test material in bags and dispose according to the policy for infectious waste.
 - Put the specimen into a sturdy container with a secure lid to prevent leaking.
 - Avoid contaminating the outside of the container and accompanying laboratory form.
 - Place the container in a clear, impervious plastic bag.
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