

Important note: this memo applies to Alberta Health Services  
Central Zone ONLY, which does not include Edmonton or Calgary.



## Central Zone Occupational Blood and Body Fluid Exposures

**Date:** March 31, 2015  
**To:** All Family Physicians and Emergency Departments, Central Zone  
**From:** Dr. Deena Hinshaw, on behalf of Medical Officers of Health, Central Zone

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Colleagues:

You may have seen a recent announcement in the March 4 Alberta Medical Association Section News from the Sections of General Practice and Rural Medicine regarding a new process for patients who have been exposed to blood or body fluids at work (e.g. needle-stick, blood splash, etc). The newsletter is available at <https://www.albertadoctors.org/media-publications/publications/section-news> .

This announcement was specifically about fast-tracking payment for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV through the WCB for those who are occupationally exposed and require this medication. In addition to the information in the AMA memo, please note that:

- Most cases of blood and body fluid exposures (BBFE) do not need HIV PEP.
- This medication should only be offered after a risk assessment has been performed.
- A risk assessment includes the mechanism of exposure, and any available information regarding the source. Provincial Post-Exposure Management and Prophylaxis Guidelines are accessible under the "Related ND documents and forms" column at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/notifiable-diseases-guide.html>
- 7 day starter-kits for HIV PEP are available at Emergency Departments, to be released after consultation with an MOH.

In the Central Zone, occupational BBFEs sustained by AHS or Covenant employees at work should be managed according to WHS/OHS protocols. For other BBFEs, including non-AHS/non-Covenant occupational exposures, Communicable Disease Control (CDC) and the Medical Officers of Health are available to assist with the risk assessment and to help coordinate necessary follow-up for exposed patients requiring Hepatitis B or HIV PEP.

The following page is a reference sheet that you can use to guide your response to all patients presenting with blood and body fluid exposures, occupational or not. We are currently working on a more detailed resource package that we hope will be available in the next several months. Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Deena Hinshaw  
Medical Officer of Health  
Alberta Health Services, Central Zone

## Central Zone Blood and Body Fluid Exposure Physician Information

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This information complements what is available in AHS and Covenant facilities for employee occupational exposures. Each facility should have a copy of the protocol to follow if a blood or body fluid exposure (BBFE) happens to a person employed by AHS/Covenant Health while at work. **For exposures other than occupational AHS / Covenant exposures, the following process is recommended:**

1. After managing any urgent symptoms / acute issues, assess the nature of the exposure. Significant exposure is typically defined as blood or blood-containing body fluids contacting mucous membranes or non-intact skin (including percutaneous sharps injuries) or sexual assault.<sup>1</sup>
2. Determine whether or not the source of the exposure is available for testing.
3. The source and recipient of the exposure should have STAT blood testing done for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBsAg), Hepatitis B Surface Antibody (HBsAb), Hepatitis C Antibody (HCV AB), HIV Antibody (HIV AB), and ALT. Please write "BBFE" in the comment section of the requisition. \*Note that additional tests may be recommended for the recipient of the exposure if HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is initiated.
4. After your initial assessment using the provincial Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Guidelines, please call our Central Zone Communicable Disease Control team at **(403) 356-6420** Mon-Fri, 8:30 to 4:30 or **(403) 391-8027 after hours** if assistance assessing the risk of exposure is required. The CDC nurse on call, in consultation with the MOH, may assist in assessing risk of the exposure, and will help arrange follow up for those patients who require Hepatitis B or HIV post-exposure prophylaxis. Please note that initiation of **HIV PEP must be approved by the MOH** in order to ensure that reporting and drug cost coverage can be arranged.

<sup>1</sup> Detailed information, titled "Post-Exposure Management and Prophylaxis Guidelines" relating to all types of BBFE, including sexual assault, is accessible at <http://www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/notifiable-diseases-guide.html> under the "Related ND documents and forms" column on the right side of the page.