

WHAT TO DO FOR A BLOOD BORNE EXPOSURE

What is a Blood Borne Exposure?

A blood borne exposure may occur when a person “the Exposed” is exposed to the blood of another person, “the Source”.

Examples of blood exposures can include:

- A cut that breaks the skin from a sharp object such as a needle that contains the blood of another person.
- Blood splashes to the inside of the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Through non-intact skin such as chapped, recent scrape or skin conditions.

What is not an exposure? You are NOT exposed if you:

- Touch a needle without puncturing the skin.
- Touch used drug equipment or Naloxone kits with intact skin.

If an injury occurs, follow the instructions below:

1. Allow the wound to bleed freely. Do not squeeze the wound.
2. Wash the wound with soap and water. Do not apply bleach or alcohol to the wound.
3. Go to your healthcare provider, walk-in clinic, or your local emergency department as soon as possible or within 24 hours for follow-up care.
 - An assessment will be done to determine the need for testing, medications and/or vaccinations.
 - You may be tested for hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, and HIV.
 - Your healthcare provider may also provide other recommendations.

For more information about these blood borne infections, visit: www.sexandu.ca

For more information about a blood borne exposure, please contact the Sexual Health Program at 1-877-721-7520 extension 8632.

Adapted from Ottawa Public Health (2025). <https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/professionals-and-partners/management-of-exposures-to-blood-borne-pathogens.aspx>

2026-05-14