

BE CAREFUL WITH BLOOD

While HIV and hepatitis B and C viruses can be transmitted by blood, the risk of infection is low. Consequently, you should not hesitate to come to the assistance of an injured person, while remembering that

- the blood of anyone (including your co-workers and people you know well) could possibly transmit an infection; and
- adequate protective measures must be taken to avoid all contact with blood and blood-stained body fluids.

Protection and prevention

Identify the risks of exposure and infection

Everyone's blood should be viewed as a potential source of infection. This being said, in order for an infection to be transmitted, the blood of an infected person has to come into contact with the blood of another person, through a point of entry. Blood on healthy skin, for example, does not as such represent a risk of infection.

You are at risk if you have

- a prick, cut or scrape with a blood-covered object;
- a bite that has drawn blood;
- blood on open skin lesions (e.g. eczema, chafing); or
- blood (especially spattered blood) on the mucous membranes (eyes, lips, mouth or inside the nose).

Blood on healthy skin does not constitute a hazardous contact.

Prevention starts with safe work practices ...

- Avoid all contact with blood.
- Wash your hands with water and soap after any contact with blood.
- Wear gloves to perform any task during which exposure to blood can occur.
- Clean and disinfect blood-stained objects with a bleach solution.
- Use gloves and tongs to handle objects that can cut, slice or prick and place the objects in a safe container.

What to do if blood comes in contact with a wound or a mucous membrane

Wounds:

- Make the wound bleed a bit.
- Clean it with mild soap and water, without scrubbing.
- Rinse with water.
- If no water is available, use a quick-dry antiseptic, and clean the wound with soap and water as soon as possible.

Mucous membranes (eyes, lips, mouth or inside of nose):

- Flush with plenty of water as quickly as possible.

Contact with blood calls for an immediate reaction!

After any contact with blood:

- Inform your employer that you have come in contact with blood.
- Take the first aid measures described in the "Be careful with blood" leaflet.

- Go to a hospital (preferably within two hours of the accident). In Montréal, you should go to the CHUM's Hôpital Saint-Luc (1058 St-Denis St.), where a department specialized in treating such cases is open around the clock.
- When you check in at the hospital, mention that you have been exposed to blood at your place of work.

For more information, see the ["Be careful with blood"](#) leaflet for workers (available in French as [Prudence avec le sang](#)).

More information (French only):

- [Commission de la santé et de la sécurité au travail](#)
- [Commission des normes du travail du Québec](#)

English :

- [Human Resources and Skills Development Canada](#)

Help and Resources

Pour plus d'informations, consultez le dépliant d'information [Prudence avec le sang](#) (PDF), à l'intention des travailleurs (document disponible en anglais [Be careful with blood](#), PDF 150 Ko)

[Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail](#)