

Managing Infectious Diseases: Blood-Borne Pathogens (Video 2)

Dr. Danette Glassy: Hello. I'm Doctor Danette Glassy. I'll be your host for this episode of "Keeping Them Safe." Today's topic is preventing infectious diseases. In this video, we'll cover preventing the spread of blood borne illnesses. It's important to know requirements for your programs vary greatly from state to state. Most states, territories, tribes or local health departments may have different regulations, training requirements, forms or other procedures in place. It is important to understand and follow your state or local regulations. Some children and adults in early care and education programs may be infected with serious viruses or bacteria and not even know it. For example, people with hepatitis B virus don't always look or feel sick. The virus is carried in their bodily fluids, especially in their blood. Hepatitis B is a blood borne illness. Blood borne illnesses won't spread unless blood from the infected person somehow makes its way into another person's body. For example, if you're cleaning up a bloody nose and you have an open cut and you're not wearing gloves or blood splashes into your eyes or mouth, you have potentially been exposed to a blood borne illness. Because of this serious risk, programs are required to follow certain procedures to help prevent the spread of blood borne illnesses.

Caring for Our Children is a collection of best practice standards for early care and education programs. Here are some highlights on how to prevent the spread of blood borne illnesses. Programs should ensure that any surfaces that could be exposed to infectious bodily fluids are either disposable or made of a material that can be disinfected. For example, your diaper changing table should have a surface that is easily disinfected. Instruct staff that when they are cleaning up blood or body fluids, they should use disposable gloves and avoid splashing any contaminated material into their eyes, nose, or mouth. Dispose of diapers and other materials such as wipes, tissues, and paper towels contaminated by blood in a plastic bag with a secure tie. For the full list of procedures, see Caring for Our Children under the topic of prevention of exposure to blood and body fluids. If you want to find materials on this topic, be sure to check out the resources for staff and families on the video page. Before we close, I have a couple of questions for you to consider. First, what policies and procedures do you have in place to prepare staff to safely handle spills of blood or body fluids? Second, how do you ensure that staff in your programs understand the importance of following protocol when handling blood or body fluids? Thanks for joining me on this episode of "Keeping Them Safe." Remember, the more you learn, the safer they are.