* 1. **Universal Precau****tions & Communicable Disease Control**

Department: Assisted Living

Approved By: Executive Team

Issue Date: February 25, 2007

Updated: March 9, 2016

**Policy:**

All employees must be familiar with universal precautions and practice at all times, and adhere to, the procedures set out in this policy. Residents shall be informed, trained, and oriented to universal precautions, where appropriate.

**Purpose:**

To protect the health and safety of residents and employees and minimize the spread of disease.

**Procedure:**

Universal precautions are steps taken to protect employees from coming into contact with the blood or body fluids of other people. Universal precautions are intended to stop the spread of germs and blood-borne pathogens to others.

Most of the time, you can’t tell if a person is infected with HIV, hepatitis-B, hepatitis-C or other blood-borne pathogens. The best approach is to treat the blood and body fluids of every person as potentially infectious.

This approach is referred to as universal precautions. The substances to which universal precautions apply include blood and other body fluids containing visible blood. Semen and vaginal fluid my carry the virus but these fluids should not be an occupations risk.

**Specific Recommendations**

Blood and Body Fluids – always treat as potential infectious. All workers must use gloves or other barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure when contact with blood and body fluids, mucous membranes or non-intact skin of all individuals, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids.

**Hand washing**

Hand washing is the single best way to prevent the spread of germs from on person to another. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. Always wash hands:

* Before preparing food
* Before mealtimes or medication assistance
* After use of the bathroom
* Before and after providing first aid
* After handling blood or body fluids and
* After sneezing, coughing and covering mouth or blowing nose.

**Sharps/Needle-stick Injuries**

All staff must take precautions to prevent injuries caused by sharps/needle stick objects. If pricked, thoroughly wash the area with soap and water. Notify Assisted Living Manager, fill out an incident report andsee physician.

**Gloves**

The following general guidelines are recommended:

* Use gloves for procedures involving contact with areas of the body that may carry blood borne diseases or infection.
* Use gloves when in contact with mucous membranes (i.e. eye, nose, mouth).
* Change gloves between each resident.

**Safe Clean up**

To safely clean up spills of blood or other body fluids, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Always wear disposable gloves.
2. Use absorbent material such as paper towels to remove most of the spill. Place these in a plastic bag and deposit in the garbage.
3. Wipe the floor, or any contaminated surfaces with a disinfectant solution. This consists of mixing one part household bleach to ten (10) parts of water. This type of bleach solution should be freshly made up or it may lose its strength. For carpets or upholstery that may be damaged by bleach, other household germicides or disinfectant agents can be used. Soak mops or brushes that have been used for cleaning in a disinfectant for 20 minutes.
4. When finished, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

**Laundry**

Linens or clothing that is soiled with blood or body fluids should be handled cautiously.

1. Always wear gloves.
2. Transport the soiled linen or clothing in the designated red bags at Southview. Do not rinse any linen or clothing in the resident suite sinks.
3. Bring the red bag from the resident’s suite to the laundry room that is on that resident’s floor.
4. For linen laundry: Use the laundry room sink to rinse off any large amounts of blood, feces, emesis that contain digestive particles. Once rinsed, place the linen in another red bag. Leave red bag in laundry room for laundry aid to pick up for washing.
5. Wash out the laundry room sink with ED disinfectant spray.
6. For Personal laundry (clothing): Use the laundry room sink to rinse off any large amounts of blood, feces, emesis that contain digestive particles. Then wash the clothing in the washing machine with hot water and detergent. Do not leave this type of laundry in the laundry room for the night staff to wash. Dry personal laundry and send back to resident’s suite.
7. Wash out the laundry room sink with ED disinfectant spray.