EMPLOYEE Safety Training

DRAFT 6/22/15

Back Safety

As a home care worker, you are exposed to more ergonomic (body movement) hazards than other jobs. These hazards may include bending, twisting, lifting, pushing and pulling and other movements that are repetitive. If these motions are not done correctly, they can lead to injury. It is important to learn proper technique to prevent back and other problems.

You can protect your back by following some simple procedures and by using good decision making. Always remember to:

- Maintain good body posture
- Use safe body mechanics
- ACT safely during transfers and lifts
- Keep in good shape

Use good posture:

Standing up straight, with shoulders back and your pelvis tucked in, aligns your vertebrae and surrounding muscles. Keep your head up, shoulders back, chest out, stomach in and buttocks tucked. You do not want to hold your body tensely but neutrally.

Safe Body Mechanics:

- Bend at your hips and knees not your waist. Bending at the waist strains the back.
- Use the force of your leg muscles to do the lifting.
- Tilt your pelvis in and contract your stomach muscles when lifting.
- Carry things close to your body. When you carry items away from your body it increases the weight to your back.
- Try to avoid twisting your body when carrying. Instead move your whole body in the direction you need to go.
- Do not lift a load that is too heavy for you by yourself. Get someone to help you.
- Use equipment to move items when possible. For example, use a dolly to take the trash can out if it is heavy.
- Keep your work surface higher than waist level to avoid straining your back.

Protective Devices for Lifting:

Using devices to lift or transfer participants will reduce back stress and prevent worker injury. Limiting manual lifting and transferring, the amount of times you move the participant and confining the transfer to a specific space, like the bathroom where there are grab bars, all reduce worker injury.

Protective devices include:

- Hoists

- Transfer belts (can makes once with a sheet. You have something to hold onto when transferring)
- Shower chairs
- Grab bars
- Walking belts with handles
- Repositioning devices

ACT Safely (Assess, Create, Transfer)

<u>Assess the situation:</u>

- Identify hazards before you begin. For example, a crowded area.
- Can the participant help with the transfer at all? What is his health condition? The participant's assistance can help overload you.
- Talk to the participant when lifting or transferring. The participant can anticipate what is going to occur and will be less anxious and rigid.

<u>Create a safe workplace:</u>

- Make sure you have plenty of room to lift or transfer. Get rid of clutter. Remove lose rugs.
- Have any equipment you need within reach.
- Secure the bed and chair you are moving the participant too.

<u>Transferring the participant:</u>

- Outline the steps of transferring with the participant
- Move the participant to the head of the bed so you can be aligned.
- Put a transfer belt on the participant.
- Make sure the participant has good shoes or non-slip slippers on.
- Move the chair close to the person.
- If transferring to a wheelchair, move the armrest nearest the participant, remove both footrests and lock the wheels.
- First move the participant to the edge of the bed, chair, or couch.
- Move one body part at a time starting with the head, then shoulders the buttocks and the legs and feet last.
- Stay low. Bend your knees and hips, keep your head up and tuck in your pelvis.
- On the count of three or another signal, move to a standing position by pulling on the transfer belt and straightening your knees.
- If the participant really struggles, have him rock back and forth.
- Once the patient is standing, pivot him toward the chair taking small steps. DO NOT TWIST.

- Bend your knees and lower the participant to the chair. The participant can hold onto your waist or shoulders but not your neck.

Staying Fit:

Keeping in shape is one of the best prevention strategies for protecting your back. Fitness involves:

- Aerobic activity (brisk walking, running, swimming, etc.). 20 minutes, 3x weekly
- Muscle strengthening (sit-ups, leg squats, lifting weights, etc)
- Flexibility exercises (yoga, stretching)

It is best to consult your physician before taking on new activities, especially if you have had previous injuries.

As a provider of home care you are at risk for back injury due to lifting and transferring. ACT wisely to avoid back injury and maintain your fitness. Using lifting devices and maintaining good posture will also help you at your own home.

Slips, Trips and Falls

The number one leading cause of injury are slips, trips and falls. Injuries are caused by:

- Wet floors or other slippery services (be very careful on ice!)
- Debris
- Loose carpets
- Throw rugs
- Electrical cords
- Poor lighting or glare from lighting
- Small dogs in the home

These are also hazards for participants and ways to improve safety in the home should be discussed.

To avoid injury:

- Watch where you are going
- Take your time and do not rush
- Keep your knees slightly bent
- Take shorter steps
- Wear supportive shoes
- Remove hazards when possible

Assessing the environment, removing hazards and proceeding cautiously when conditions are not ideal is the best way to prevent slips, trips and falls for yourself and the participant.

Infectious Diseases (Infectious Disease Control Center reference)

An infectious disease or communicable disease is caused by a biological agent such as by a virus, bacterium or parasite. Infectious diseases are the invasion of a host organism (human) by a foreign replicator, generally microorganisms, often called **microbes** that are invisible to the naked eye.

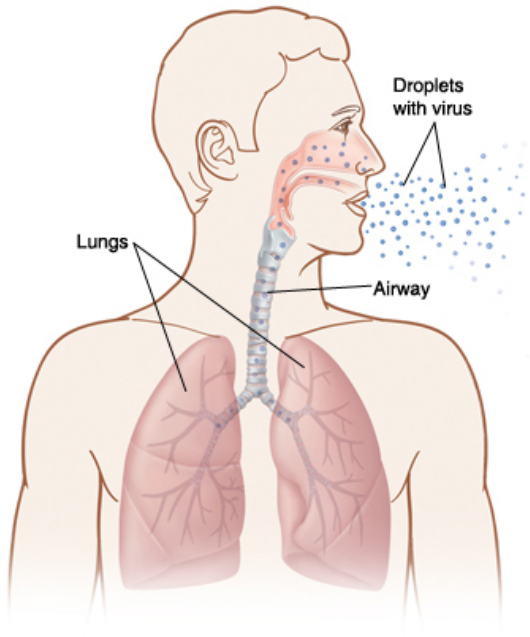
Microbes that cause illness are also known as pathogens. The most common pathogens are various **bacteria** and **viruses**, though a number of other microorganisms, including some kinds of **fungi** and **protozoa**, also cause disease. An infectious disease is termed *contagious* if it is easily transmitted from one person to another.

The common viruses that caregivers may be exposed to are discussed below:

Influenza

Influenza ("the flu") is an infection that affects the respiratory tract (the mouth, nose, and lungs, and the passages between them). Unlike a cold, the flu can make a person very ill. And it can lead to pneumonia, a serious lung infection. For some people, especially older adults, young children, and people with certain chronic conditions, the flu can have serious complications and even be fatal.

What Are the Risk Factors for the Flu?



Viruses that cause influenza spread through the air in droplets when someone who has the flu coughs, sneezes, laughs, or talks.

Anyone can get the flu. But you're more likely to become infected if the person:

- Has a weakened immune system.
- Works in a health care setting where you they be exposed to flu germs.
- Lives or works with someone who has the flu.
- Hasn't received an annual flu shot.

How Does the Flu Spread?

The flu is caused by viruses. The viruses spread through the air in droplets when someone who has the flu coughs, sneezes, laughs, or talks. People can become infected when they inhale these viruses directly. They also become infected when you touch a surface on which the droplets have landed and then transfer the germs to their eyes, nose, or mouth. Touching used tissues, or sharing utensils, drinking glasses, or a toothbrush with an infected person can expose a person to flu viruses, too.

What Are the Symptoms of the Flu?

Flu symptoms tend to come on quickly and may last a few days to a few weeks. They include:

- Fever usually higher than 101°F (38.3°C) and chills
- Sore throat and headache
- Dry cough
- Runny nose
- Tiredness and weakness
- Muscle aches

Factors That Can Make Flu Worse

For some people, the flu can be very serious. The risk of complications is greater for:

- Children under age 5.
- Adults 65 years of age and older.
- People with a chronic illness, such as diabetes or heart, kidney, or lung disease.
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.

How Is the Flu Treated?

Influenza usually improves after 7 days or so. In some cases, the person's health care provider may prescribe an antiviral medication. This may help the person get well sooner. For the medication to help, the person needs to take it as soon as possible (ideally within 48

hours) after your symptoms start. If the person develops pneumonia or other serious illness, hospital care may be needed.

Easing Flu Symptoms

- Drink lots of fluids such as water, juice, and warm soup. A good rule is to drink enough so that the person urinates your normal amount.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Ask the health care provider what to take for fever and pain.
- Call the provider if your fever rises over 101°F (38.3°C) or the person becomes dizzy, lightheaded, or short of breath.

Taking Steps to Protect Others

- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing. Or, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand cleaner containing at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue. Then throw the tissue away and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow.
- Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or chills. Be sure the fever isn't being hidden by fever-reducing medication.
- Don't share food, utensils, drinking glasses, or a toothbrush with others.
- Ask your health care provider if others in your household should receive antiviral medication to help them avoid infection.

How Can the Flu Be Prevented?

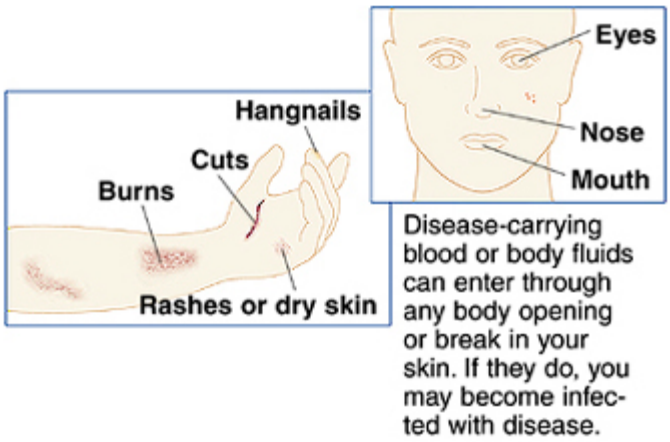
- One of the best ways to avoid the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year. Viruses that cause the flu change from year to year. For that reason, doctors recommend getting the flu vaccine each year, as soon as it's available in your area. The vaccine may be given as a shot or as a nasal spray. Your health care provider can tell you which vaccine is right for you.
- Wash your hands often. Frequent handwashing is a proven way to help prevent infection.
- Carry an alcohol-based hand gel containing at least 60 percent alcohol. Use it when you don't have access to soap and water. Then wash your hands as soon as you can.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- At home and work, clean phones, computer keyboards, and toys often with disinfectant wipes.

If possible, avoid close contact with others who have the flu or symptoms of the flu.

Understanding Bloodborne Pathogens

Blood or body fluids may contain pathogens (germs) that can cause disease. If there is an accident at work involving blood or body fluids, these germs can be spread. The most common and serious bloodborne pathogens are the **hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV),** and **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).** Once these germs infect a person may become sick. In turn, the germs may spread to others. The 3 bloodborne germs described below are the most common causes of infections in the workplace.



Hepatitis B virus (HBV)

- Hepatitis B can cause severe damage to the liver and can even lead to death.
- A vaccine is available to help prevent hepatitis B infection. This vaccine is given as 3 injections over a period of time.
- Adults who aren't vaccinated and are exposed at work to another person's blood or body fluids can be given medicine or a vaccine after the exposure. This helps prevent infection from developing.

Hepatitis C virus (HCV)

- Like hepatitis B, hepatitis C can cause severe damage to the liver and can lead to death.
- There is no known vaccine for HCV.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

- HIV makes it harder for the body to fight infection. HIV causes **acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS),** which is a serious illness that can lead to death.
- There is no known vaccine for HIV.

How you could get infected at work

Bloodborne diseases can infect you when:

- You help an injured person without using a protective barrier between you and the infected person's blood or body fluids.
- An object or surface with infected blood or body fluids on it touches your broken skin.
- Contaminated body fluids on your unwashed hands come in contact with your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- You are pricked or scratched by a sharp object (such as broken glass, or a needle) that has infected blood or body fluids on it.

Universal Precautions (Primary Home Care reference)

Practices issued by the CDC (Center For Disease Control) in 1987 to reduce the spread of AIDS, Hepatitis B and other infections we may not even know of from one person to another, especially people who take care of other people.

Universal Precautions are rules about how you protect yourself from touching the bodily fluids from another person. This is important, because bodily fluids are how diseases like Hepatitis and AIDS are transmitted to another person.

When to Use them?
The rule is to ALWAYS use the Universal Precautions, because you often have no way of knowing if a person has a life threatening disease that you could catch.

Why Are Universal Precautions Important?
You are taking care of someone who may have chronic (ongoing) illnesses, or who may be contagious (as in the case of the flu) meaning you could “catch” what they have.

WEAR GLOVES: By gloves we mean latex or vinyl hand protection. They can be bought at most pharmacies. Gloves **MUST** be worn anytime you **MAY** come into contact with blood, body fluids, or mucous membranes.

Example of when to wear gloves would include helping client blow nose, or use the toilet.

Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you put on gloves…and of course after you remove them!
You should also wear gloves when:

- To cover your hands if you have cuts, scrapes or broken skin
- There is possible contact with soiled linen, feces, vomit, dressings or wound drainage, or you need to touch soiled clothing.

How to Safely Remove Gloves

1. Remove a glove by grasping it below the cuff—and pulling it off, while wearing the other glove….do not touch your bare skin.
2. Pull the glove down over your hand so it is inside out.
3. Hold the glove you removed with the other glove.
4. Reach inside the other glove and pull it down over the first glove.
5. Discard gloves and wash your hands. This process can be confusing at first, if you have any questions ask us!

Review
Wearing gloves is your best protection against bloodborne pathogens. They are to be worn anytime a worker may come into contact with bodily fluids of another person. Gloves are a barrier between YOU and the potentially infected client and will help prevent the spread of viruses.

Universal precautions were developed in 1987 to prevent the further spread of the AIDS virus, and also Hepatitis. Today, they prevent us from contracting these and other unknown diseases.

Remember: Hands and any other part of your body which comes into contact with blood or bodily fluids MUST be washed immediately. Wash your hands completely after removing and disposing of your gloves. If you work with more than one participant, wash your hands after finishing work with each.

NOTE: *Use clean gloves for each task, or set of related tasks.*

MANAGING SHARPS: If you are working with someone who is diabetic or takes injectable medication, DISPOSE OF SHARPS PROPERLY. IF THERE IS NO SHARPS DISPENSER AT THE HOME, MAKE ONE USING AN EMPTY METAL COFFEE CAN WITH A TIGHT FITTING LID, OR PLASTIC MILK JUG W/CAP.

Do not touch a client's skin if they have open wounds or lesions.

If you are shaving the individual or brushing his/her teeth, be very careful not to nick them, and avoid touching the cut.

Caregiver's Role:
Other things you can do:

- Double glove if you suspect a person is infected with hepatitis, HIV or AIDS.
- Properly dispose of sharps
- Always be aware of your surroundings, and what you come into contact with.
- It is important exercise, eat right and get good sleep to keep your immunity strong so you do not get sick and pass on illness to those you are working with.

HANDWASHING

Germs are everywhere around us. Normally, we live with germs without getting sick. In certain circumstances, harmful germs cause us to get sick with an infection. We also can spread harmful germs to others and cause them to get sick. Keeping your hands clean is the best way to prevent getting or spreading germs that cause infection. Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

When to Clean Your Hands

It is easy to come into contact with many harmful germs. To help prevent infection, wash your hands often, especially:

- After using the bathroom
- Before and after eating
- After coughing or sneezing

- After using a tissue
- After touching or changing a dressing or bandage
- After touching any object or surface that may be contaminated
- After contact with blood or body fluids
- After touching or changing the person's bed linens or towels
- After removing protective gloves

Tips for Good Handwashing

Steps for Washing Hands:

- Use warm water and plenty of soap. Work up a good lather.
- Clean the whole hand, under your nails, between your fingers, and up the wrists.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds to 30 seconds. Don't just wipe. Scrub well (Sing Happy Birthday or recite the Alphabet).
- Rinse, letting the water run down your fingers, not up your wrists.
- Dry your hands well. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

Steps for using Hand Sanitizers:

Alcohol-based hand cleaners may kill more germs than soap and water. Use them when your hands aren't visibly dirty. You do not want to overuse using sanitizers though because some amount of germs help your defense. For best results, follow these steps:

- Choose a gel or spray that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Products with less alcohol may not kill germs.
- Spread about a tablespoon of cleaner in the palm of one hand.
- Rub your hands together briskly, cleaning the backs of your hands, the palms, between your fingers, and up the wrists.
- Rub until the cleaner is gone, and your hands are completely

CONCLUSION: You are considered a health care provider and work with vulnerable adults and children who are may have or are more susceptible to infectious diseases, trips and falls and need assistance with moving. Please follow the prevention ideas in this Handbook to protect yourself and the person you serve from injury and viruses.