Universal Precautions & Safe Work Practices

Universal Precautions and Safe Work Practices are infection control guidelines designed to protect all individuals from exposure to illness and disease.

In order to be safe, assume that all blood, body fluids, tissues, and secretions are infectious.

- **Wash Hands**
  Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection. Wash your hands well, scrubbing all surfaces of the hands, with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.

- **Proper Cough Etiquette**
  Cover the mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

- **Cover Cuts**
  Cover cuts or open sores on your skin with a clean plastic bandage.

- **Wear Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment**
  If there is any risk of coming into contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials and organisms, wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including, but not limited to:
  - Gloves
  - Laboratory coats, coveralls, tyvek suits
  - Eye protection
  - Foot coverings
  - Respiratory protection

  PPE must always be removed before leaving the location of the infectious material.

- **Clean Up**
  Spills of blood or other potentially infectious materials must be immediately cleaned up with a fresh mixture of household bleach (1 part) and water (9 parts) or other appropriate disinfectant. Allow for adequate disinfectant time (15-30 min).

- **Discard Garbage**
  Discard materials contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials in a sealed plastic bag. The plastic garbage bag must be tied off and disposed of immediately.

  Needles or sharps cannot go into normal garbage; they must be disposed of in a proper sharps disposal container.

- **Routinely Clean and Disinfect Surfaces**
  Take a moment to clean and disinfect areas like your desk, keyboard, and phone.

- **Get Immunized**
  It is easy and low-cost, and most importantly, it saves lives.

- **Talk to a health professional if you have health related questions.**