

Health and Hygiene Awareness Package



Safety Prompts

Symbols are used throughout this module to highlight specific points, particularly those that involve safety. The symbols and their meaning are shown below.



DANGER

This prompt is used when there is an immediate hazard that **IS LIKELY TO** result in severe personal injury or death if proper procedures are not followed.



CAUTION

This prompt is used to warn against potentially unsafe practices that **COULD** result in personal injury or death and/or property damage if correct procedures are not followed.



NOTE

This prompt is used when an operation, condition, or information is of sufficient importance to warrant highlighting.

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AWARENESS PACKAGE

1. INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH AND HYGIENE

To promote good health, OTML provides facilities for employees and contractors, such as toilets, showers, change rooms, dining room / crib and storage areas. OTML is also responsible for providing hand washing facilities, supplies of soap and hand cleaner, clean drinking water.

To ensure that all facilities remain in a safe and hygienic state, you need to follow some basic rules and meet the health and hygiene standards set by legislation and OTML.

All employees are responsible for their personal hygiene and health and are expected to act in such a way to minimise the spread of disease.

This document highlights the basic requirements that can help you to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.



2. OTML HEALTH AND HYGIENE PROGRAMS

As an organisation OTML conducts health hazard identification surveys to identify actual and potential health risks within the workplace and the surrounding community. From these surveys programs are developed to help keep workers and the community safe and healthy including:

- Establishing exposure limits, e.g. to radiation, heat, bacteria in drinking water, extended working hours
- Personal exposure monitoring
- Ongoing workplace health hazard monitoring
- Training in relevant hygiene principles, exposure limits and control measures for personnel potentially exposed to a health hazard (physical, chemical or biological)
- Environmental monitoring
- Biological control and disease management
- Fitness for work and wellbeing including pre-employment and pre-placement assessment, drug and alcohol testing, mental health and employee assistance program
- Travel health safety and security measures
- Food safety
- Workplace ergonomics
- Provision of appropriate work clothing for personnel potentially exposed to chemicals and other harmful agents.



3. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

A consistent approach to monitoring health and hygiene issues across OTML will help to:

1. Facilitate the collection, collation and analysis of health related data
2. Determine safe exposure limits
3. Inform the choice of corrective actions where safe exposure limits are exceeded
4. Ensure appropriate management of health and hygiene issues including follow-up and reporting of results and actions from occupational hygiene monitoring.

3.1. HEALTH SURVEILLANCE MONITORING

To demonstrate that personal exposures are controlled to levels within acceptable Occupational Exposure Limits (OEL), health related data must be collected, collated and reported on. This is known as health surveillance.

Before a worker is exposed to a hazardous work activity, they will be informed of the health risks and any health surveillance requirements.

Workers:

- Have access to the results of any health or medical surveillance results that relate to them personally
- Can request that results of health surveillance be reviewed.

Health surveillance programs include counselling services related to the health monitoring process and outcomes.

Information relating to health surveillance results, diseases or death resulting from occupational exposure will be reported to the Responsible OTML Managers and the appropriate health authority.

Health data collection methods include:

- Biological monitoring (blood, urine, lung function, etc)
- Monitoring attached to personnel (breathing zone monitor, hand held sound level meters, Geiger counter, etc).



All collections and assessments are carried out under the direction of a certified occupational or industrial hygienist and all records are confidential.

3.1.1. SIMILAR EXPOSURE GROUPS

When collecting and analysing health related data, workers carrying out similar tasks with similar exposure potential are grouped together in Similar Exposure Groups (SEG). If a worker is found to be suffering from work related illness or infection, testing will be offered to other workers in the SEG.



3.1.2. OVEREXPOSURE

Where a potential or actual overexposure is detected, e.g. exposure to prolonged or excessive noise, the following actions will take place.

1. Interim and longer term control plans are developed following the hierarchy of controls.
2. Controls are put in place and evaluated for effectiveness.
3. Information about the situation and controls is reported at the operational and management levels.
4. Exposures are reassessed through maintenance monitoring.

3.2. PRIORITY HEALTH HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

OTML priority health hazards are identified from the outcomes of the health surveillance program. Global risk controls are determined for each of the priority health hazards and these are included in Procedures and Work Instructions.



NOTE

The rest of this resource looks at YOUR responsibilities in relation to health and hygiene and what YOU can do to contribute to a safe and healthy workplace.

4. PERSONAL HYGIENE

Personal hygiene means keeping yourself, your clothing and personal items clean. A high standard of personal hygiene is essential and is encouraged among all workers. Keeping yourself clean will help you to feel better and will lower your risk of getting sick. Your friends, family and co-workers will also benefit by having you fit and healthy.

4.1. GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES

Good personal hygiene practices include the following.

- Wash your hands often, especially after using the toilet, before eating, after sneezing or coughing, after touching animals or anything that is dirty.
- Always wash your hands when you finish work.
- Shower or bathe daily, using soap to wash all of your body. Rinse off and dry yourself well, especially in skin folds and between your toes.
- Wash your hair regularly, and make sure all your combs and brushes are clean too.
- Brush your teeth, at least twice a day and avoid eating foods that cause decay and bad breath.
- Wear a deodorant, or use some other method for controlling bad body odour.
- Wear clean clothes, particularly socks and underwear which must be changed daily.
- Keep nails clean and neat, using the right equipment. Do not bite your nails as this can lead to an infection.



4.2. CONSEQUENCES OF POOR PERSONAL HYGIENE HABITS

The consequences of poor personal hygiene habits include the following.

- The risk of infection and disease increases (lowered immunity).
- You have a higher chance of getting sick.
- General wellness decreases.
- You are more likely to spread germs.
- Your family, friends and co-workers may suffer because of your bad habits.
- People may avoid you because of your lack of personal hygiene.



4.3. WHY IS HANDWASHING SO IMPORTANT?

Handwashing is the most important and effective method of preventing infection and the spread of dangerous germs.

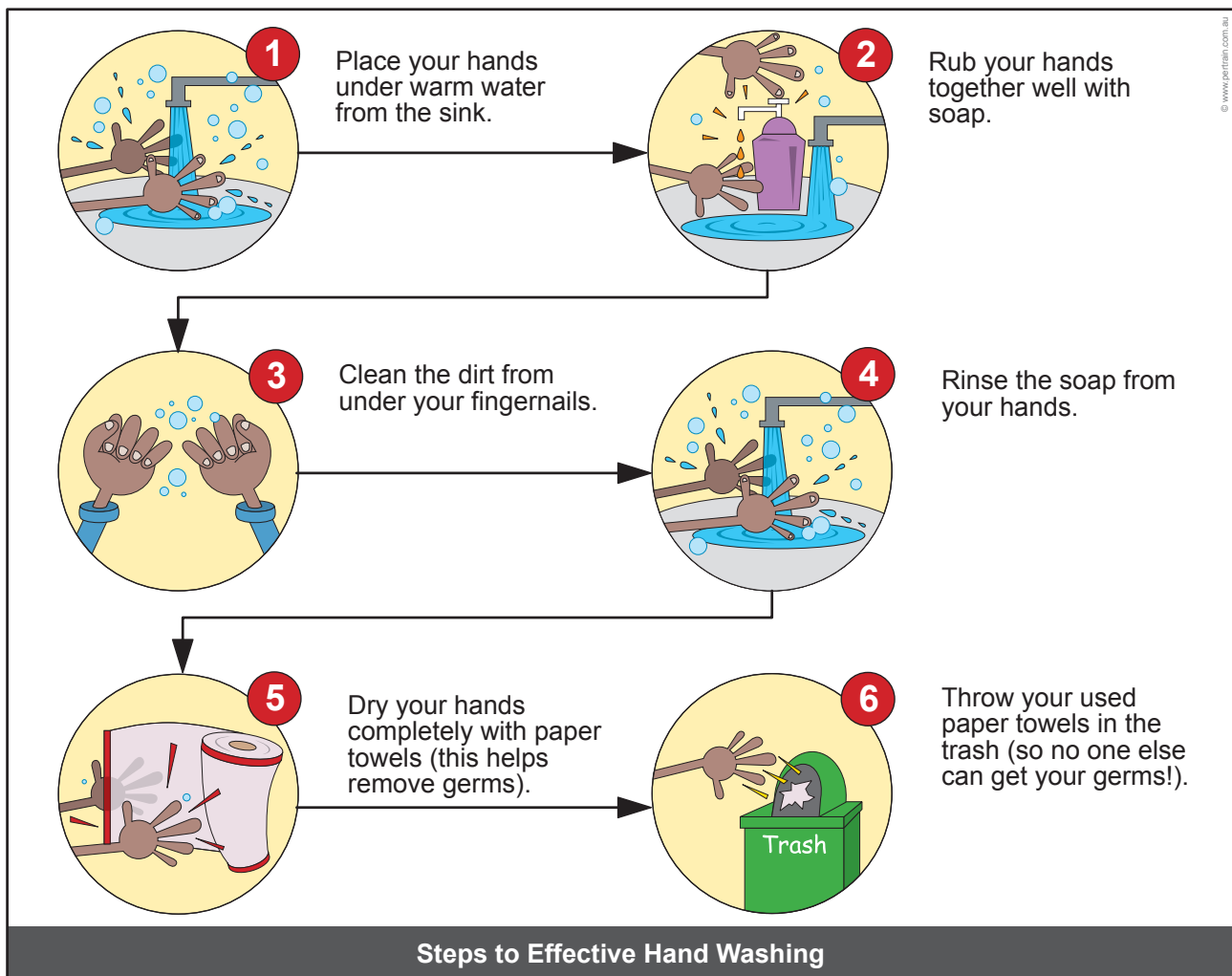
Many germs and diseases are spread by touching surfaces covered with germs. These germs and disease-causing bacteria are then spread to other parts of your body, for example when you touch your eyes, ears or nose.

Dirty hands carry infectious germs into your body if you bite your nails or put any part of your hands into your mouth.

Germs can spread rapidly where people are working closely.

Washing your hands regularly and effectively can prevent infections such as diarrhoea being passed from person to person.

Follow these steps to wash your hands:



4.4. MORE TIPS TO PREVENT SPREADING GERMS

Coughing, sneezing and spitting are all ways in which germs are spread in the air causing other people to become ill. When you cough or sneeze you cause droplets to travel from your body through the air. These droplets usually only travel a short distance before settling on other people and surfaces, where they can remain infectious for several hours.

Minimise the spread of germs by:

- Using your hand or inside of your elbow to cover a cough or sneeze
- Using a tissue or handkerchief to cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze
- Never spitting on the ground
- Covering cuts and sores so germs can not enter into your body
- Not biting your nails or putting your fingers into your nose or mouth.



5. WORKPLACE HYGIENE

Keeping your workplace clean is a team effort. It is everyone's responsibility to keep it clean.

5.1. GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING

A clean and tidy workplace is a more pleasant environment to work in. It is also safer and healthier.

People working in clean and orderly surroundings are less likely to have accidents or be exposed to environmental health hazards.

Good housekeeping standards must be practiced to maintain a safe, clean and hygienic environment.

Good housekeeping practices include:

- Cleaning up spills immediately
- Wiping down surfaces after you have used them
- Cleaning and putting things away in the proper place after you have used them
- Moving items that pose tripping or slipping hazards or that block access ways and fire exits
- Removing clutter that can harbour germs or cause a fire hazard
- Disposing of waste appropriately, according to the site waste management plan
- Ensuring water is not left sitting in containers (stagnant water is a breeding ground for disease-spreading mosquitoes)
- Using proper bins for disposing of rubbish
- Reporting any maintenance issues (leaks, dust build up) promptly and checking they are addressed
- Making sure that housekeeping supplies and tools are available and ready to use, if not report it to your supervisor.



5.1.1. DUST AND ALLERGENS

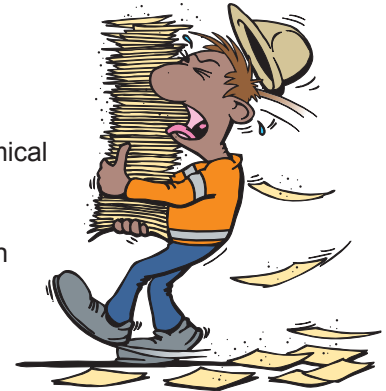
Chances of getting the flu and other respiratory (breathing) illnesses are increased when working indoors.

Spending time indoors, particularly in areas with high levels of dust and allergens, can result in workers suffering from allergies, asthma and chemical sensitivities.

Clean air in the workplace is essential to properly functioning lungs. Clean fresh air can also improve concentration levels and general well-being.

Reduce your exposure to harmful dust and allergens by:

- Removing the source of pollutants – remove dust-collecting clutter and wipe down dusty surfaces with a damp cloth
- Ensuring ventilation is adequate – advise maintenance of any ventilation problems.



NOTE

Some anti-allergy drugs bought over the counter can affect your work. Make sure that you speak to your doctor or pharmacist about the side effects of medications you are taking and inform your supervisor of ALL medications.

5.1.2. CLEAN SHOES BEFORE ENTERING BUILDINGS

Dirt, dust, pollen and other allergens can enter the workplace on the bottom of your shoes.

Some diseases are also carried in mud and animal excretions (faeces, urine, phlegm, etc.) that may be attached to the soles of your shoes.

Many fungal infections carried in dirt and mud can affect the outer layers of your skin. Although fungal infections are not considered dangerous, they are sometimes difficult to cure. Common fungal infections include athlete's foot and ringworm.

Fungal infections that affect the deeper layers of the skin and internal organs can cause serious, often deadly, illness. These fungi are often found in mud. To avoid introducing these infections into the workplace environment, wipe your shoes or boots before entering buildings.



5.2. TOILETS

Because many diseases can be spread via urine and faeces, it is important to ensure that correct methods are always undertaken to dispose of human waste. Toilets provide a hygienic method of disposing of human waste products, minimising the risk of spreading disease.

Toilets must be used at all times, and used correctly, in order to prevent the spread of disease.



5.2.1. HOW TO USE TOILET FACILITIES CORRECTLY

When using a toilet or urinal it is important to ensure the urine is kept within the boundaries of the bowl.

On completion, flush the toilet or press the button above the urinal in order to dispose of the urine and to rinse the bowl.

Other toilet considerations include the following.

- Keep all faeces as well as urine within the bowl. Never use any other container for toilet purposes
- Use toilet paper or paper towel to wipe up accidental spills and drips in the bathroom. Do not leave it for someone else.
- Use enough sheets of toilet paper to protect your hands from accidental contamination.
- If the toilet has a lid, close it before flushing to help prevent germs from being sprayed into the air and on nearby surfaces.
- Flush each time you use the toilet to dispose of the waste and clean the bowl.
- Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet. Dry your hands using dryers or paper towel and dispose of the paper towel in the appropriate rubbish bin.



Public and workplace washrooms are areas of high risk in relation to germs as many people share the same surfaces.

Use toilet paper or paper towel to touch any surfaces that appear unclean.

The paper towel can help keep your hands from being infected. Advise the appropriate person if surfaces need cleaning.

5.3. KITCHEN AREAS

Kitchen areas harbour more germs than any other room, including washrooms and toilets.

Kitchen sponges and dish cloths are the perfect place for germs as they are moist most of the time.

To keep kitchen and dining areas safe and healthy, follow these guidelines.

- Make sure that all surfaces are clean and free of crumbs to reduce the risk and minimise the spread of food-borne bacteria.
- Keep all surfaces and equipment dry to help control the growth of moisture-loving bacteria like mould and mildew.
- Remove any materials that could attract mice, rats and other pests.
- Do not leave food out to rot or decay. Dispose of it in rubbish bins.
- Clean all spillages with the appropriate equipment. Do not use the same cloth for washing crockery and cutlery and wiping floors and other dirty surfaces.
- Dispose of soiled cloths if they can not be washed clean.
- Clean as you go.
- Wash all utensils used and return them to their correct location.



5.3.1. FOOD PREPARATION

If you work with food you must adhere to additional health and safety requirements to ensure that food products and preparation areas are protected from physical, chemical and microbiological contamination.

These requirements include the following.

- Do not wear jewellery or watches in food preparation areas.
- Report to your supervisor if you are suffering from any injury or illness which may impact on food safety, such as colds, flu, stomach bugs, diarrhoea, boils or any pus-filled infections.
- Treat cuts or open wounds immediately and cover with a waterproof contrasting colour band-aid or bandage. Use brightly coloured band-aids in the kitchen so they are easy to spot if they come off.
- Wash hands regularly and well (at least 20 seconds with soap) to ensure that food contamination is minimised. Wash hands:
 - Before putting on or changing disposable gloves
 - When you move from handling raw to cooked food products
 - When returning from any breaks including smoke or meal breaks
 - When returning from using the toilet
 - When cleaning and removing rubbish
 - After touching any part of the body such as mouth, nose and ears
 - After sneezing or coughing
 - After touching hair or putting on hair nets
 - After any other activity that may contaminate food or work surfaces.
- Dry hands thoroughly after washing them using a single use, disposable paper towel. Do not use a tea towel. These are only to be used for drying dishes.
- Wear appropriate PPE, including:
 - Hair net, hat or cap (long hair must be tied back)
 - Rubber soled, closed in shoes
 - Apron
 - Long pants or long skirt
 - Sleeved shirt (no singlets)
 - Disposable gloves (mesh gloves may also be required).
- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood.
 - Bring foods like soups and stews to boiling to make sure that they have reached 70°C.
 - Make sure that meat and poultry juices are clear, not pink.
 - Use a thermometer when cooking.
 - Reheat cooked food thoroughly.
- Prevent food cross-contamination by keeping raw and cooked foods separate.
 - Use separate equipment and utensils (e.g. knives and cutting boards) for handling raw foods.
 - Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared food.
 - Store raw foods below ready-to-eat or cooked foods in case of leakage



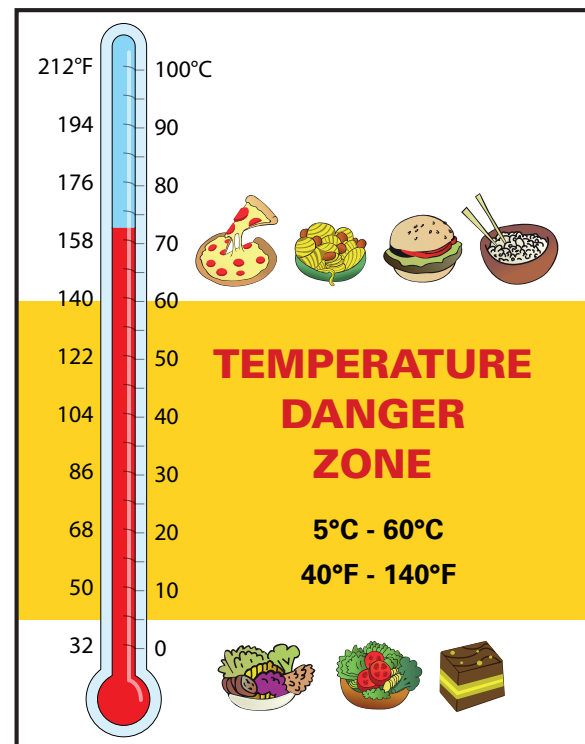
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- Use colour coded cleaning cloths, chopping boards, serving tongs and spoons to prevent cross-contamination of food products.

Colour	Food Item/s
Blue	Fish and seafood
Red	Uncooked meats (not poultry)
Green	Fruits and vegetables
Yellow	Poultry
White	Dairy products and bakery
Brown	Cooked meats



- Keep Food at Safe Temperatures:
 - Store cold foods below 5°C
 - Keep hot food above 60°C
 - Do not leave cooked food at room temperature for more than two hours
 - Refrigerate all cooked and perishable food promptly
 - Frozen foods must be frozen solid /hard
 - Do not store food for too long, even in the refrigerator
 - Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave not at room temperature.
- Wash fruits and vegetables if they are to be eaten raw.
- Use potable water for all food handling and preparation.
- Check and abide by use-by dates.
- Check for pest contamination (e.g. droppings, eggs, webs).
- Check for foreign objects (e.g. dirt, metal, hair).
- Rotate stock to ensure oldest is used first.
- Note all ingredients so people with food allergies can avoid foods that would cause them an allergic reaction.
- Clean, disinfect and sanitise all food preparation and serving surfaces, glasses, crockery and cutlery in accordance with catering cleaning schedules and procedures.
- Do not store chemicals in the same areas as food products.
- Clean all spillages with the appropriate equipment. Do not use cloths used for wiping crockery and cutlery for wiping floors and other dirty surfaces.



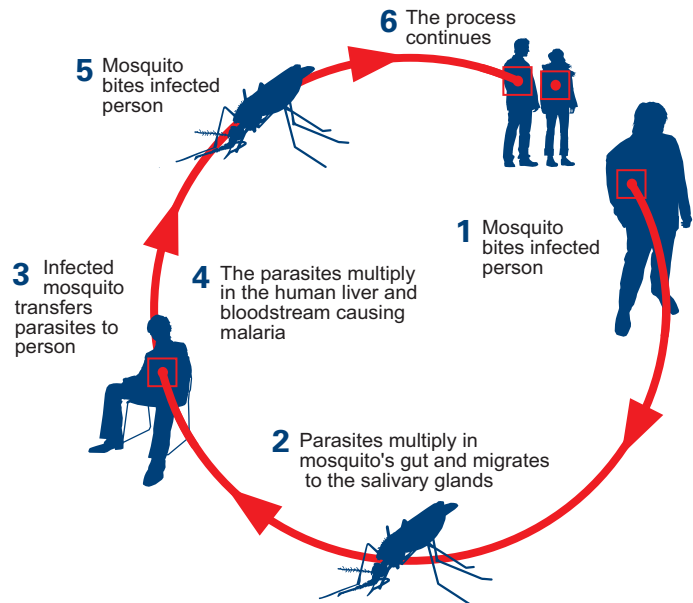
6. SERIOUS DISEASES

6.1. MALARIA

Malaria is a common disease around the world. Malaria is caused by a parasite which is transmitted from person to person through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Man and mosquito both play a role in the Malaria cycle.

Mosquitoes are also responsible for other diseases including viruses such as Dengue Fever, Encephalitis and Yellow Fever.

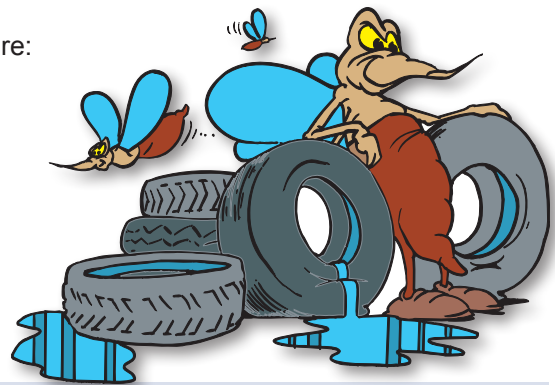


6.1.1. CONTROLLING MOSQUITOES

Water management is an effective way of preventing mosquito breeding. Eggs do not hatch unless they are on or in water. Get rid of standing water whenever possible.

Areas that must be checked regularly for stagnant water are:

- Rubbish bins that might collect water
- Choked water drains
- Uneven floor surfaces where water lies
- Tyres
- Pot plants
- Puddles
- Dams.



NOTE

For more information on Malaria, refer to the Malaria Awareness Package.

6.2. HIV / AIDS

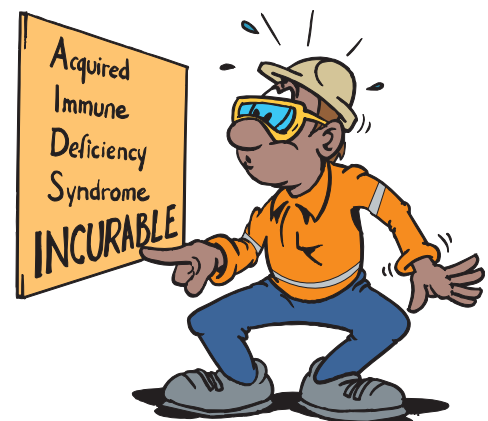
People around the world are being infected every minute with HIV. HIV is the virus that causes aids.

More than 35 million people worldwide are living with HIV / AIDS. The majority of these people live in developing countries where the high price of medication means that treatment is not an option.

HIV is an immune deficiency virus which leads to Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).
AIDS is incurable.

When a person has AIDS:

- The immune system loses its ability to fight infection
- Opportunistic infections and cancers then develop in the body.



6.2.1. WHO CAN GET HIV / AIDS?

Anyone can become infected with HIV. There are no 'risk groups' only 'risk behaviours'.

Common risk behaviours that can result in infection include:

- Unprotected sex (heterosexual and homosexual)
- Drug use (injected drugs)
- Sharing needles (syringes)
- Sharing instruments for tattooing, ear / body piercing
- Kissing where saliva is passed onto the other person, particularly if either person has bleeding gums or mouth ulcers
- An infected mother can infect her unborn child and can infect her baby through breast feeding
- A cut or sore on your body which may come into contact with body fluids of an infected person.



NOTE

HIV can ONLY be transmitted through body fluids.

The virus spreads from one infected person to another and can remain undetected for some time after acquiring the infection.

6.2.2. PREVENTING HIV

Always have safe sex. Sex can be made safer for both parties by **always** using a condom.

When using condoms check:

- **Expiry (use by) date:** do not use a condom that is past its use by date
- **Storage:** condoms must be kept away from:
 - heat (for example not in car glove compartments)
 - pressure (for example sitting on a wallet containing condoms)
- **Fingernails:** can tear a condom during use
- **Instructions for use:** this can help avoid condoms tearing or bursting during intercourse.



NOTE

Avoid alcohol and drugs as they can affect your judgement and cause you to take risks you would not otherwise take, like having unsafe sex or sharing needles.

6.2.3. THE EFFECT OF HIV / AIDS

Imagine the effect one irresponsible person with HIV / AIDS could have on a community.

- One infected person has unprotected sex with multiple uninfected partners who unknowingly contract the disease.
- These people pass the virus on to other uninfected sexual partners.
- These partners are now also infected.
- Should any of these people become pregnant the disease is passed on to the children.

You can see how quickly this killer disease can spread and the effect it could have on your community.



DANGER

Never assume that you or someone else would not have HIV. The only way of knowing if someone is HIV positive is by having a blood test.

6.2.4. HOW CAN I HELP TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF HIV / AIDS?

You can play your part in helping to prevent the spread of HIV / AIDS by:

- Not engaging in unsafe sex
- Not using syringes or other instruments that have used by someone else
- Educating yourself and your family about the dangers of HIV / AIDS and how to prevent it
- Being a good role model for other people in your community
- If you are already carrying HIV, ensuring you take every precaution to prevent spreading the virus to other people.

6.3. HEPATITIS A, B AND C

Hepatitis is a virus which causes inflammation of the liver and can lead to cirrhosis of the liver or even liver cancer. There are three types of hepatitis - Hepatitis A, B and C.

6.3.1. HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis A can be a severe illness from which you can take up to three months to recover. Hepatitis A is present in faeces and other bowel secretions.

It is transmitted by:

- Contact with surfaces, utensils, food and water contaminated by faeces, then not washing your hands
- Some sexual activities.

Symptoms include:

- Fevers
- Sweats
- Extreme tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Dark urine and pale faeces
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice).



NOTE

To help prevent Hepatitis A, wash your hands regularly with soap and water.



6.3.2. HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B can be transmitted by infected blood, semen, mucus, vaginal secretions, saliva or breast milk entering the body of another person.

Transmission is common through:

- Birth (from mother to baby)
- Unsafe sex
- Needle sharing.

Symptoms include:

- Weakness
- Extreme tiredness
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes).



Many people with Hepatitis B have no symptoms and most people with the disease recover completely. However, some people will become chronic carriers which means that they are infectious for the rest of their lives. These people must conduct themselves in a responsible manner to avoid spreading the disease.

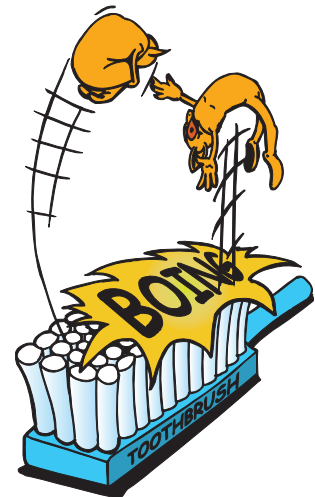
6.3.3. HEPATITIS C

Hepatitis C is transmitted through blood contact by:

- Sharing needles
- Needle stick injuries
- Razor blades
- Toothbrushes
- Unsterile tattooing or body piercing equipment.

Symptoms of acute Hepatitis C infection include:

- Decreased appetite
- Fatigue
- Abdominal pain
- Jaundice
- Itching
- Flu-like symptoms.



NOTE

It will be considered ethically and morally irresponsible if you knowingly engage in any activities that put yourself or others in danger of contracting HIV / AIDS, Hepatitis or any other communicable disease.

7. PREVENTING DISEASES

Infections are spread in a variety of ways:

- Direct contact transmission
- Indirect contact transmission (people / surfaces)
- Airborne droplets.



NOTE

Persons working together and using shared washroom and kitchen facilities run a risk of passing on infections and disease.

7.1. DIRECT CONTACT TRANSMISSION

Direct contact transmission requires some form of touch between two people or a person and an animal.

Common infections spread by direct contact transmission include:

- Head lice (can also be spread by indirect contact)
- Conjunctivitis
- Cold sores (herpes)
- Shingles
- Ebola.



Most germs have to enter the mouth, nose or eye to cause an infection, but there are several that can spread directly from skin to skin.

Many bacterial infections only spread if there is a break in the skin such as an insect bite, a scratch or broken skin, e.g. around the nose from frequently wiping a runny nose.

Parasites such as scabies or lice can be transmitted by direct contact from person to person, even in the absence of broken skin. They can also be transmitted via indirect contact by waiting on hair brushes, towels, sheets and pillow cases and then transferring to a person who comes into contact with the item.

The best way to prevent being infected is to:

- Avoid direct contact with infected persons and animals
- Wash your hands well and often
- Cover sores and broken skin.

7.2. INDIRECT CONTACT TRANSMISSION

Indirect contact transmission occurs when people come into contact with surfaces that have been infected with germs from another person or an animal.

Using certain facilities or eating particular foods can also cause infection and disease in a community. Even though only one person may be affected, germs in the faeces and other secretions of this person can be passed on to others, affecting the community at large.



7.2.1. FUNGAL INFECTIONS

Fungal infections include mould-like fungi and yeast-like fungi causing tinea, athlete's foot and ringworm. Fungal nail infections and fungal infections of the feet are can be difficult to treat and may recur often.

Fungi thrive in warm, moist areas, such as communal showers. Your chance of getting a fungal infection is increased when correct foot care is not practiced.

Follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of fungal foot infections.

- Only wear closed in footwear when it is absolutely necessary.
- Ensure footwear is well ventilated.
- Wear woollen or cotton socks to draw moisture away from the feet.
- Change socks frequently.
- Ensure the skin is not moist for long periods. Always dry your feet thoroughly.
- Keep your skin clean by washing regularly.
- Wear sandals or take other precautions to ensure your feet do not come into contact with the surface of the shower cubicle when using communal showering facilities.
- Prevent nail and skin injuries when possible.



NOTE

Tinea infections are contagious and can be passed through direct contact or indirect contact. Indirect contact can happen through items such as socks, shoes and shower surfaces.

7.2.2. DIARRHOEA

Do not underestimate the impact of diarrhoea. It is the second leading cause of death in children under five years old and can lead to acute dehydration in people of any age. Diarrhoea is preventable and treatable.

A significant proportion of diarrhoeal disease can be prevented through safe drinking water and adequate sanitation and hygiene.

The three main causes of diarrhoea are:

- Bacterial infection
- Viral infection
- Parasites.



BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

Several types of bacteria, consumed through contaminated food or water, can cause diarrhoea.

Sources of the infection include improperly prepared food, particularly reheated meat dishes, seafood, dairy and bakery products. Each organism causes slightly different symptoms but all result in diarrhoea.

VIRAL INFECTIONS

Many viruses cause diarrhoea. Most people with diarrhoea have a viral infection in the gastrointestinal tract.

Infections that cause diarrhoea are very contagious. Invisible organisms hide on hands, utensils and surfaces and can be transferred into your body through your mouth or nose.



PARASITES

Parasites can enter the body through food or water and settle in the digestive system.

Bacteria and parasites can get into waterways (lake, river, ocean) from sewage spills, animal waste and water runoff. People who drink, swim, or play in infected water can get sick.



NOTE

People who have diarrhoea caused by parasites, can infect others if they use shared bathing facilities.



7.3. AIRBORNE DROPLETS

Droplet transmission occurs when bacteria or viruses travel on relatively large respiratory droplets that people sneeze, cough, drip or exhale (breathe out). They can be spread directly if people are close enough to each other.

Droplets that land on people, surfaces, doorknobs, pens, food, telephones, etc. can remain infectious for long periods. Hands that come into contact with these surfaces become contagious. When an infected hand touches the nose or eyes, the infection is able to enter the new person.

Infections that can be spread by droplet transmission include:

- The common cold
- Influenza.

7.3.1. COMMON COLD

When someone has a cold, the mucus running from the nose is teeming with cold viruses. Sneezing, nose-blowing, and nose-wiping are the means by which the virus spreads.

You can catch a cold by breathing in the virus if you are sitting close to someone who sneezes, or by touching your nose, eyes, or mouth after you have touched something contaminated by infected nasal discharge.

Cold symptoms usually start with a sore throat then runny nose and congestion along with a cough by the fourth or fifth days. Adults usually don't have a fever with a cold. Children might have a fever with a cold. Cold symptoms usually last for about a week and you are contagious for about the first three days.

If cold symptoms last for more than a week you may have a bacterial infection and should see your doctor.



7.3.2. NOSE PICKING

Nose picking is an easy way of transferring dangerous bacteria from your nose onto your fingers. Once your fingers come into contact with a surface, food, another person, or even yourself, these dangerous bacteria are passed on.



DANGER

Never eat mucus from your nasal passage as the dirt, germs and bacteria are then transferred into your body.

If you need to get rid of nasal mucus, blow your nose into a tissue or handkerchief and then dispose of the tissue immediately or wash the handkerchief. Do not leave them lying around where they can come into contact with another person who can get sick from the bacteria on them.

Blowing mucus from your nose onto any surface will spread germs and bacteria which have the potential to cause illness in other people or even yourself, if the germs harboured in your nose come into contact with broken skin.

7.3.3. INFLUENZA (THE FLU)

Although a cold and the flu share some similar symptoms, they are quite different diseases.

The flu is much more serious than a cold.

Flu symptoms are usually more severe than cold symptoms and come on quickly. Symptoms include:

- Sore throat
- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches and soreness
- Congestion and a cough
- Some strains of flu include vomiting and diarrhoea.



The flu can be a very serious illness and its effects can last for days or even weeks. The flu can also lead to further health problems such as pneumonia. The most deadly recent worldwide outbreak of flu was at the beginning of the 20th century, when influenza killed more than 20 million people.

Like the cold virus, the flu virus enters your body through the mucous membranes of your nose, eyes and mouth. Every time you touch your hand to one of these areas, you could be infecting yourself with a virus. So keep hands germ-free with frequent washing to prevent flu and cold symptoms.

8. SUMMARY

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. You can play your part in helping to keep your workplace safe and healthy by:

- Complying with all health and hygiene standards and requirements
- Reporting any health or hygiene related issues to your Supervisor
- Maintaining a good standard of personal hygiene
- Practicing good housekeeping to help keep your workplace clean and hygienic
- Protecting yourself from disease and preventing the spread of germs, viruses and bacteria that cause disease.



NOTE

Treat your workplace and co-workers with respect.

Remember, you have the right to stop work if you think it is unsafe or unhealthy to continue. If in doubt talk to your supervisor.



