How should I protect my family, others and myself after an exposure?

If your exposure puts you at risk for infection, the doctor may tell you to take the following precautions:

- Do use latex condoms (with a spermicide) during sexual activity.
- Do cover any cuts or scratches.
- Do tell your dentist at your next visit about the exposure.
- Do not share personal items like your toothbrush or razor.
- Do not donate blood, organs or semen.
- Do not breast feed.

General tips to prevent exposure:

- Wash hands with soap and water often.
- Always cover open sores with a bandage.

If you find used needles or condoms:

- Never touch with your hands.
- Call the City Work’s Yard at 604-270-8721.
- If needed, use gloves or tongs to remove needles and condoms. Place them in a hard container with a lid.

For more information:

Richmond Health Department
604-233-3150
Emergency Department
The Richmond Hospital
604-244-5151
Your family doctor

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and quote Catalogue No. BA.100.AC25
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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

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Richmond Health Department
7000 Westminster Highway
Richmond BC V6X 1A2
Tel: 604-233-3150

Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.
It is best to assume that all blood and body fluids are infectious.

You are at risk of getting an infection when:

• You have been pricked with a used or dirty needle.
• You have an open cut or scrape that has been in contact with another person's blood or body fluids.
• You had another person's blood or saliva splashed or sprayed in your eye, nose or mouth.
• You have been bitten or scratched by another person and the skin has been broken.

Blood and body fluids may have viruses or bacteria.

These could cause the following infections:

**Hepatitis B**

Hepatitis B infection is preventable. You are encouraged to have a Hepatitis B vaccine if your work or lifestyle exposes you to the virus.

If you have not had Hepatitis B vaccine, you may begin your Hepatitis B vaccine series immediately following an exposure.

**Hepatitis C**

There is no preventive vaccine for Hepatitis C. If exposed, you will be tested on a regular basis to make sure that you have not been infected.

**Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)**

If the doctor suspects exposure to HIV, you will be advised to start drug treatment.

It is best to start this treatment within the first 2 hours after being exposed. This drug treatment usually lasts for 28 days.

**Tetanus**

You may require a Tetanus vaccine if you have not received one in the last 10 years.

For more information, contact your local health department or your family doctor.

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**What to do if you are exposed.**

1. **Immediately apply first-aid.**
   - For Skin Exposure/Needle Poke:
     • Allow your cut to bleed.
     • Wash thoroughly with soap and water for three to five minutes.
   - For Eye, Nose, or Mouth Exposure:
     • Rinse well with water.

2. **You must go to an Emergency Department within 2 hours of exposure.**
   • Explain details of what happened.
   • A doctor assesses your injury.
   • Blood tests and treatment are started if necessary.
   • Any follow-up testing with your family doctor is done to make sure the risk of infection is gone.

**Note:** This pamphlet does not address exposure from unprotected sex.