



## Bedside Care

This video highlights essential information for frontline care providers about infection prevention, HIV transmission and the use of universal precautions and responses to accidental workplace exposures. Experts in the field of HIV, physicians, nurses and personal support workers from an HIV/AIDS hospital and a Long Term Care home discuss their experiences working with people living with HIV.

### Transmission

- HIV is a fragile virus that cannot survive outside of the body. You cannot be infected with HIV from toilet seats or from sharing dishes or utensils, and HIV does not get passed through the air. HIV infected bodily fluids must reach the HIV-susceptible cells in the blood.
- There are five bodily fluids that can potentially have enough HIV in them to infect someone: blood, semen, vaginal fluids, rectal fluids and breast milk. You cannot get HIV from body fluids such as saliva, sweat or urine.

### Universal precautions

- It is recommended that universal precautions are used when caring for a person living with HIV – in other words, the same infection control measures that are in place with all clients.
- Examples of universal precautions include: regular hand washing; using gloves to clean up spills involving body fluids and while performing personal/wound care; using other Personal Protective Equipment such as masks and gowns as instructed by your place of work for working with individuals with highly infectious illnesses such TB, MRSA, etc.
- Infection control is critically important to protect a person living with HIV, who may be susceptible to infections that can be potentially fatal to someone with a severely compromised immune system.

### PEP

- Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is used to reduce the risk of infection in a person who may have been exposed to HIV. If you think you may have been exposed to HIV, inform your supervisor and contact your doctor immediately, and arrange a risk assessment and evaluation by someone knowledgeable in the field of HIV. A recommended course of action may include HIV and Hepatitis testing and taking anti-HIV medications right after a potential exposure to HIV (within 72 hours).

### Sources and links

The **AIDS Committee of Toronto** offers information on the basics of HIV and HIV transmission, including downloadable brochures: [www.actoronto.ca/home.nsf/pages/information](http://www.actoronto.ca/home.nsf/pages/information)

The **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety** provides fact sheets on universal precautions and routine practices in the workplace: [www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/universa.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/universa.html)

CATIE offers information on PEP and prevention: [www.catie.ca/en/hiv-canada/4](http://www.catie.ca/en/hiv-canada/4)

**Public Health Ontario** offers resources and guidelines on infection control and prevention: [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca)