



Accidental Exposure to Blood (AEB): reading and vocabulary

A. Read the text to find the answers to the questions.

Accidental exposure to blood (AEB)

Certain medical procedures carry a higher risk of exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the healthcare worker. These procedures are known as *exposure prone procedures* (EPPs). EPPs include procedures where the healthcare worker's gloved hands may come into contact with:

- sharp instruments, needle tips, scalpel blades or sharp tissues, e.g. small pieces of bone or teeth
- the inside of a patient's open body cavity during open surgical procedures
- wounds, e.g. during deep suturing or dressing changes of deep wounds

Employers have a responsibility to provide employees with information about the risks from injuries involving medical sharps, as well as training in good practice in preventing sharps injuries. The main risks of infection from skin or mucous membrane exposures are from hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), however other infectious agents can also be transmitted on rare occasions.

The risk of transmission following a needlestick injury has been estimated at approximately 1 in 3 for HBV, 1 in 30 for HCV and 1 in 300 for HIV. Training in the correct use of sharps disposal containers (sharps bins) should include advice on the location of the containers:

- in a safe position which avoids the risk of spillage; that is, on a level surface
- away from public access areas where the bins may be accidentally knocked over
- at a height which is convenient for the healthcare worker to easily dispose of used sharps
- away from children or vulnerable people

Sharps bins should be temporarily closed when not in use. Once bins are filled to the fill line, they should be closed securely and disposed of in an appropriate waste bin. The label on the bin should be completed with the date of closure and signature of the healthcare worker responsible for closing the bin. All bins should be emptied every three months, even if they are not at capacity.



1. Exposure prone procedures are procedures which are...
A low risk because nurses always wear gloves.
B high risk because blood contact is more possible.
C not a risk if nurses have limited contact with instruments.

2. Mucous membrane exposure to blood-borne viruses may be through the...
A eyes, nose and mouth.
B mouth only, e.g. accidental ingestion.
C eyes only, e.g. splash injuries.

3. The virus which carries the highest risk of being transmitted during an AEB is...
A Hepatitis B virus.
B Hepatitis C virus.
C HIV.

4. The location of sharps bins is important to...
A indicate where healthcare workers can find them.
B ensure they are in a convenient place for their use.
C prevent contents from spilling out of the container.

5. The safe disposal of sharps bins includes...
A correct closure of a bin that is full.
B use of the correct clinical waste bin.
C both A and B.

B. Match the words and definitions.

1. accidental exposure to blood (AEB)	a) receptacle used to dispose of sharp objects, e.g. needles
2. appropriate	b) suitable for a particular purpose or need, causing the least difficulty
3. at capacity	c) sharp cutting point of a scalpel
4. blade	d) passing a disease or infection to another person
5. convenient	e) suitable or acceptable for a particular situation
6. needlestick injury	f) full
7. sharps bin	g) unexpected contact with blood during a procedure
8. transmission	h) a wound caused by a sharp object puncturing the skin



C. Complete the sentences with words from B.

1. Never use your fingers to attach or remove a _____ .
2. Arrange a _____ time to talk to the patient.
3. Any _____ incidents must be reported immediately.
4. Always dispose of needles immediately in a _____ .
5. _____ PPE should be used at all times.
6. There is a possible risk for blood-borne disease _____ .
7. A&E is _____ and no beds are currently available.
8. Make sure you know what to do if you sustain a _____ .