

# Fact Sheet

## Blood-borne Diseases

- Blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) are transmitted from person to person through infected blood and body fluids, such as semen, vaginal secretions, and in some cases, saliva.
- Hepatitis B virus can live in or on metal, cotton or glass for 1-2 weeks.
- **You do not have to see blood or body fluids on instruments for an infection to be transmitted.**
- Always clean and disinfect or sterilize instruments and equipment between clients to reduce the possibility of transmitting blood-borne diseases.
- Sometimes a person with a blood-borne disease may not show symptoms right away or at all, but they can still spread the disease to others.
- Some people may not even know they are infected with a blood-borne disease, therefore assume all clients are potentially infected with a blood-borne disease and follow routine practices. (Refer to additional "Routine Practices" fact sheet)
- Always wear gloves during invasive procedures and wash your hands after removing the gloves once the procedure is completed.
- Only use sterile and single-use needles and blades. Discard used needles and blades into a labeled sharps container.
- There are no vaccines that protect against hepatitis C and HIV.
- There is a vaccine available that protects against hepatitis B. Immunization with the hepatitis B vaccine is strongly recommended for all PSW.

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