

CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF

CODE OF GUIDANCE

HIV/AIDS

This Code of Guidance provides information on HIV/AIDS. It addresses the following:-

- 1.0 What is HIV/AIDS?
- 2.0 How is the virus transmitted?
- 3.0 Precautions

1.0 What is HIV/AIDS?

AIDS is short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is caused by the Human Immunodeficiency Virus or HIV. The virus can affect the body's normal defence against illness. Some people with HIV remain healthy for years without developing AIDS. People are recognised as having developed AIDS when the breakdown of the body's defence leads to serious infections and certain cancers.

At the moment there is no known drug or other treatment which will cure AIDS although several drugs can delay or alleviate symptoms.

2.0 How is the virus transmitted?

Normal social and work contact with an infected person is safe.

The virus is only transmitted when body fluids of a person with HIV infection (blood, semen, vaginal secretions) reach and find access to another person's blood supply. This is a result of:

- a) direct contact with fresh contaminated blood e.g. needle share.
- b) receiving infected blood and blood products. (All donated blood in the UK has been tested for HIV antibodies since October 1985 and any positive blood is not used).
- c) some forms of sexual activity, particularly vaginal or anal intercourse.
- d) transference from mother to baby across the placenta.

There is no risk of infection where there is no direct contact with blood, semen or other body fluids of infected individuals. Even where there is direct contact, the virus can only be transmitted via open wounds. It cannot penetrate unbroken skin.

Infection is not spread through the air (e.g. by sneezing or coughing) through ingestion, or by touch. No cases have been recorded of transmission by mouth-to-mouth contact or mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Nor is there any danger from handling objects which have been used by an infected person, or

1.CM.020	Date: 11/00	Issue 1	Process Owner: Christina Lloyd	Authorisation: Phillip Higgins	Page 1 of 2
----------	-------------	---------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------

from sharing an office or washroom facilities with them. There is no risk of getting the virus by swimming in a public swimming pool.

The HIV virus is very fragile and therefore, very easily destroyed by most commonly used disinfectants and by heat (HIV is inactivated at 56°C for 10 minutes - the usual temperature of household hot tap water is 58-60°C).

3.0 Precautions

In the normal course of employment, employees are not at risk of HIV infection. However if blood or other body fluids or hypodermic syringes are encountered, specific hygiene precautions should be observed.

Further Information:

Cardiff City Council/South Glamorgan County Council HIV Strategy

Code of Guidance - Hygiene Precautions Blood and Other Body Fluids
Code of Guidance - Needlestick Injuries.

1.CM.020	Date: 11/00	Issue 1	Process Owner: Christina Lloyd	Authorisation: Phillip Higgins	Page 2 of 2
----------	-------------	---------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------