



Hepatitis B FAQs for the Public

How long does the Hepatitis B virus survive outside the body?

Hepatitis B virus can survive outside the body at least 7 days. During that time, the virus can still cause infection if it enters the body of a person who is not infected.

How should blood spills be cleaned from surfaces to make sure that Hepatitis B virus is gone?

All blood spills — including those that have already dried — should be cleaned and disinfected with a mixture of bleach and water (one part household bleach to 10 parts water). Gloves should always be used when cleaning up any blood spills. Even dried blood can present a risk to others.

Source website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/b/bfaq.htm#bFAQ29>

What is HIV?

HIV stands for human immunodeficiency virus. It is the virus that can lead to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, or AIDS. Unlike some other viruses, the human body cannot get rid of HIV. That means that once you have HIV, you have it for life.

No safe and effective cure currently exists, but scientists are working hard to find one, and remain hopeful. Meanwhile, with proper medical care, HIV can be controlled. Treatment for HIV is often called antiretroviral therapy or ART. It can dramatically prolong the lives of many people infected with HIV and lower their chance of infecting others. Before the introduction of ART in the mid-1990s, people with HIV could progress to AIDS in just a few years. Today, someone diagnosed with HIV and treated before the disease is far advanced can have a nearly normal life expectancy.

Source website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/basics/whatishiv.html>

HIV Transmission

Can I get HIV from getting a tattoo or through body piercing?

A risk of HIV transmission does exist if instruments contaminated with blood are either not sterilized or disinfected or are used inappropriately between clients. CDC recommends that single-use instruments intended to penetrate the skin be used once, then disposed of. Reusable instruments or devices that penetrate the skin and/or contact a client's blood should be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized between clients.

Personal service workers who do tattooing or body piercing should be educated about how HIV is transmitted and take precautions to prevent transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections in their settings.

If you are considering getting a tattoo or having your body pierced, ask staff at the establishment what procedures they use to prevent the spread of HIV and other blood-borne infections, such as the hepatitis B virus. You also may call the local health department to find out what sterilization procedures are in place in the local area for these types of establishments.

Source website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/qa/transmission.htm>