

Infectious Disease Precautions

Precautions to prevent the spread of infectious disease are especially important in the emergency care setting, where the risk of exposure to respiratory droplets and body fluids is increased and the infection status of patients is often unknown. Universal respiratory, blood and body fluid precautions should be taken on all patients, to prevent skin, mucus membrane and respiratory tract exposure.

1. EMS responders shall don medical gloves and eye protection prior to initiating any emergency patient care.
2. Fit tested NIOSH approved masks shall be worn when treating patients suspected of having a respiratory illness or when performing procedures involving a potential exposure to aerosolized particles.
3. All patients suspected of having a respiratory illness and/or being transported to a healthcare facility should have a face mask applied provided it does not impair oxygenation or ventilation.
4. EMS responders shall abide by the healthcare facilities requirements for wearing a mask.
5. Wash hands and other body surfaces immediately if contaminated with blood or body fluids.
6. Use respiratory adjuncts and resuscitation bags when necessary to oxygenate and/or ventilate patients and avoid mouth to mouth resuscitation.
7. Sharp instruments, needles and scalpels should be handled carefully during procedures, cleaning and disposal. Needles should not be recapped, bent broken by hand, or removed from disposable syringes.
8. All disposable materials used in patient care should be disposed of in containers intended for biohazard waste.