



Bloodborne Pathogen Exposures on the Rise

Splashes and sprays increase, while sharps injuries decrease.

Hospital employees and physicians are reporting more exposures to blood and body fluids, despite an almost 50 percent drop in sharps injuries since 2001.

In FY 2004, Hospital employees reported 52 bloodborne pathogen exposures from splashes and sprays, a 35% increase over FY2003.

Although it is unclear whether the employees are sustaining more splashes and sprays or simply better reporting the exposures they sustain, the message is clear: **If you're a healthcare worker, you must protect yourself from blood and body fluids.**

The Hospital provides personal protective equipment (PPE) for all employees working in areas where exposures can occur. Gowns, gloves, masks, goggles, and face shields are stocked in supply rooms in patient care and lab areas throughout the Hospital.

Hospital policy requires employees to use the PPE provided, but preventing exposures requires that each employee take responsibility for his own personal safety.

By the Numbers: Splashes and Sprays

Body Parts Exposed	Numbers
Eyes	32
Nose	8
Mouth	16
Broken Skin	9
Intact skin	17
Body Fluids Involved	
Blood	34
Sputum	12
Urine	4
Vomit	1

Be Ready!

The Hospital is only as prepared as its workers.

In the face of rising threats of terrorism, the Department of Homeland Security has declared September 2004 National Preparedness Month. The effort is focused on helping the individuals and families prepare for a terrorist attack.

As a designated receiving hospital, UK Hospital works to maintain a state of readiness to respond to disasters of all sorts. The Hospital regularly trains employees; conducts drills and exercises; maintains inventories of equipment, pharmaceuticals, supplies, and personal protective equipment, however, on any given day, the Hospital is only as prepared as its workers.

As a member of the Hospital's team of essential personnel, every employee must prepare at home so that he or she is able to respond to the hospital if disaster strikes. In order to be prepared, Hospital employees should take the time to develop and test a family response plan that will give them the peace of mind they will need to stay focused during an emergency.

The Department of Homeland Security recommends:

- Creating and practicing a home evacuation plan.
- Developing and testing a family communications plan so that individuals know how to reach each other during emergencies.
- Putting together a basic home response kit that includes: water, food, medication, first aid kit, radio, flashlights, batteries, dust masks, plastic, duct tape, and other essentials.
- Placing important documents, such as insurance policies, identification, and bank records, in a portable, waterproof/fireproof container.

September Exercise will Test Decontamination

Volunteers Needed: Don't put away your swimming suits just yet.

UK Hospital is looking for a few good people to serve as casualties for a September 16, 2004 disaster drill. The exercise is designed to test the Hospital's ability to respond to a hazardous materials incident at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

The community has scheduled a full-scale exercise for late October, but some area hospitals are conducting "out of sequence" exercises to make it easier to find volunteers. According to Tomi Ross, Hospital Safety Officer, "it's really hard to find people who will volunteer to be decontaminated in October."

Volunteers for this exercise will be asked to strip down to their bathing suits so that they can be washed and rinsed by Emergency Department nurses and technicians, trained to conduct patient decontamination.

UK Hospital has a small-incident decontamination room outside of the Emergency Department. The room is heated and provides some privacy to patients being decontaminated. In a mass casualty situation, however, the Hospital would be required to set up shower units and wading pools and hoses in an outside area in order to accommodate greater numbers of victims. The September exercise will test both decontamination systems.



The Hospital's emergency department has an established decontamination program. ED nurses and techs are educated and trained to the first receiver operations level, as required

by OSHA, and participate in an annual refresher course. The OSHA-based education provides detailed information about chemical identification and properties, decontamination techniques, personal protective equipment (PPE), safety, and incident command. The training provides workers with experience donning and doffing PPE, setting up the equipment, and decontaminating patients. Decontamination is a skill that has to be practiced over and over again.

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) requires hospitals to conduct at least two exercises each year—at least one with an influx of patients. UK Hospital conducts four to five drills each year in order to test various aspects of its emergency response plan.

To volunteer for the September 26 exercise, call Shaunesia Davis. 323-6023.

Hospital Departments Improve Safety Inspection Scores

The average safety inspection score for Hospital departments improved to 82% between January and June 2004. That's five percentage points higher than in the previous inspection period, but still eight percentage points below the standard of 90%.

The surveillance team officially inspects every area of the Hospital semi-annually to look for any problems that could compromise the safety of employees, visitors, and patients. There are many more rounds through the year, headed by administrators, environmental services, PPD, and others, but the semi-annual inspections are the ones on which Hospital areas are scored.

The Hospital safety inspection covers:

- Condition of the facility related to fire prevention, life safety, and security
- Housekeeping and infection control
- Appropriate labeling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials
- Preparedness to respond to emergencies
- Compliance with medical equipment preventive maintenance program
- Staff knowledge about utilities and medical equipment issues
- Employee compliance with policies and procedures related to safety and security.