

Recommended Practices for Blood Glucose Monitoring and Insulin Administration: Preventing Blood Borne Virus Transmission

Unsafe practices during diabetes care (blood glucose monitoring and/or insulin administration) have led to multiple outbreaks of hepatitis B virus and put persons at risk for acquiring other blood borne viruses, including HIV and hepatitis C virus. In the past five years, 13 hepatitis B virus outbreaks associated with infection control breaches during assisted monitoring of blood glucose in long-term care facilities have been [reported](#) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The following recommendations should be followed by anyone who performs or assists with blood glucose monitoring and/or insulin administration. These recommendations apply not only to licensed health care facilities but also to *any* setting where finger stick procedures are performed and/or insulin is administered. Health care providers who supervise other health care staff that perform these procedures should be aware of these infection control recommendations and assure that assisted blood glucose monitoring is performed correctly and safely.

- **Finger stick devices should *never* be used for more than one person, even if lancets are changed and the device is cleaned and disinfected.**



- Even if lancets (needles) are changed and cleaning and disinfection of the device is attempted, microscopic blood contamination of the device can remain and can result in transmission of blood borne viruses.
- In settings where assisted monitoring of blood glucose is performed, single-use, auto-disabling finger stick devices should be used. These devices are disposable after one use.
- If reusable finger stick devices are used, it should only be by individual persons using these devices for self-monitoring of blood glucose.

- **Whenever possible, blood glucose meters should be assigned to an individual person and *not* be shared.**

- If blood glucose meters must be shared, the device should be cleaned and disinfected after every use, per manufacturer's instructions. If the manufacturer does not specify how the device should be cleaned and disinfected, then it should not be shared.



- **Insulin pens and other injection equipment (e.g., needles, syringes, insulin vials) are only approved for single-patient-use only and should *never* be used for more than one person.**

- **Wear gloves during blood glucose monitoring.**

- Always wear gloves during blood glucose monitoring and during any other procedure that involves potential exposure to blood or body fluids.
- Change gloves between patient contacts. Change gloves that have touched potentially blood-contaminated objects or finger stick wounds before touching clean surfaces. Discard gloves in appropriate receptacles.
- Perform hand hygiene before patient contact and before putting on gloves for patient contact, and immediately after removal of gloves and before touching other medical supplies intended for use on other persons.



For more information, please visit:

- CDC Injection Safety Website (Blood Glucose Monitoring & Insulin Administration): <http://www.cdc.gov/injectionsafety/blood-glucose-monitoring.html>

- CDC Viral Hepatitis and Diabetes Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/Settings/GlucoseMonitoring.htm>
- The One & Only Campaign: <http://www.oneandonlycampaign.org/>
- CDPHE Injection Safety Website: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-DCEED/CBON/1251623630878>