

## **Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure**

In dentistry, the diseases we are most concerned about are those caused by bloodborne pathogens (BBP). Examples are hepatitis B and C and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Transmission may occur from a patient to a dental health care provider (DHCP), from a DHCP to a patient, or from one patient to another patient. The best way to prevent the transmission of BBP is adherence to Standard Precautions.

**Standard precautions** are the minimum infection prevention practices that should be used in the care of all patients all of the time. These practices are designed to both protect the healthcare worker and to prevent the healthcare worker from spreading infections among patients.

Standard precautions include:

1. Hand hygiene
2. Use of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns, masks)
3. Safe injection practices
4. Safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces in the patient environment, and
5. Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.

*Cited from the CDC-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*