

INTRODUCTION

Assisted living lets patients retain some independence while helping them stay as healthy and safe as possible. However, in helping patients, employees are often exposed to hazards themselves. Therefore, it is important to be aware and be safe.

DISEASE

Assisted living patients may be more susceptible to sickness such as the cold or flu. To lessen the chance of catching the sickness from them, remember:

- Wear gloves if contact with the patient's mouth or other areas is required.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food, eating, or drinking.
- Get all of your immunizations.
- Strengthen your immune system by eating right and exercising.



BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Bloodborne pathogens are transferred through blood. People who are exposed to bloodborne pathogens are at risk for serious and even life threatening diseases, such as Hepatitis B and HIV. To avoid contracting these diseases, remember:

- Be especially careful around needles.
 - Never recap, break or bend needles.
 - Never leave needles unattended.
 - Never reuse disposable needles.
- Follow your company's procedures for disposal of needles in regulated color-coded containers.
- Wear personal protective equipment such as gloves and goggles if you will be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials.



If you are exposed to bloodborne pathogens:

- Don't panic.
- Wash the area with soap and water.
- Flush eyes or mucous membranes with water.
- Inform your supervisor and seek medical attention immediately (within about two hours).

INJURY

A good number of injuries in the assisted living workplace involve some sort of muscle strain or injury from lifting. The injuries can be caused by too much physical exertion to perform a task, repetitive motion, and awkward positions. To avoid these types of injuries, be sure to:

- Try to switch tasks throughout the day.
- Bend your knees as you lift.
- If you need help lifting something, do not hesitate to ask.
- If your patient starts to fall, do not try to catch them because you will end up injuring yourself.
 - Slow their fall by putting the weight on their forward leg.
 - Focus on protecting their head.

Other injuries can come from slipping and falling, so be sure to wear non-slip shoes and clean up spills as soon as possible.

EMERGENCIES

Know where all emergency exits are located and know the evacuation plans for your workplace. If you work in the homes of the patients, then know where the exits are and how to safely evacuate the patient.

CONCLUSION

To make sure you are safe while working in assisted living, remember to practice safety to prevent diseases, bloodborne pathogens, injuries, and to know what to do in emergencies. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you are unsure about anything, so you can continue to assist patients with their everyday activities.

