

INTRODUCTION

Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATDs) are diseases that are transferred through the air and through airborne droplets. There are many types of ATDs, including measles, tuberculosis (TB), and SARS. In order to protect yourself from contracting these diseases, it is important to remember the following tips.

WHO IS AT RISK

According to OSHA, employees at risk for ATDs work at:

- Hospitals and skilled Nursing Facilities
- Clinics, medical offices, and other outpatient medical facilities
- Facilities where high hazard procedures are performed
- Home health care, long term health care facilities and hospices
- Medical outreach services
- Emergency response services such as paramedics and EMTs
- Medical transport services

Additionally, there are certain facilities where the employees are at an increased risk, such as homeless shelters, drug treatment programs, and services that receive people arriving from a scene of hazardous waste.

HOW YOU CAN BECOME INFECTED

ATDs are passed through the air or through aerosol droplets. Therefore, people with prolonged, frequent, or close contact with people infected to the diseases are exposed and at a very high risk of becoming infected if they do not take the proper precautions.

In addition, some diseases, such as tuberculosis (TB), are capable of surviving for relatively long periods of time in airborne particles or droplet nuclei. Therefore, even if a person does not have face-to-face contact with infected people but works in the same area, they should take the same precautions as those working face-to-face with these diseases.



PRECAUTIONS WHEN WORKING WITH THE DISEASE

Respirators: One of the best and most practical ways to prevent infection from ATDs is to wear respirators

- You should undergo a “fit-test” to make sure your respirator is air tight and will actually protect you from the ATDs

AEROSOL TRANSMISSIBLE DISEASES

- Every time you put on your respirator, you should ask yourself these questions to see if you need to do another fit-test for your respirator:
 - Have you had recent major dental work, facial injury or facial surgery since your last fit-test?
 - Have you had a significant weight gain or loss since your last fit-test?
 - Do you want to be provided with an additional fittest for your current respirator?
 - If you answered yes to any of the questions, should undergo another fit-test.
- It is also recommended that you wear other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
 - Gloves
 - Gowns
 - Eye Protection
- Wash your hands before and after being exposed to the disease.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED

Sometimes accidents happen, such as respirators not working properly, a broken container releasing a disease, or other emergencies. When this happens, you should:

- Remain calm
- Follow your workplace's safety procedures to avoid infecting others
- Seek medical attention as soon as possible
- Create an incident report

CONCLUSION

Although ATDs are dangerous, it is still possible to work with them and people infected with them as long as you know the proper precautions. Be sure to wear your PPE, know and follow your company's procedures, and use common sense to protect yourself from becoming infected.

