9F – INFECTIOUS DISEASE PRECAUTION RECOMMENDATIONS EMS PROFESSIONALS

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONDER

EMT

EMT-INTERMEDIATE 85

ADVANCED EMT

PARAMEDIC

In the course of EMS care of a patient (from time of emergency services request through transport of the patient to the destination location), EMS professionals should be informed, aware, and proactive regarding practices that reduce their exposure to infectious diseases, with a goal of preventing transmission of those infectious diseases to and/or through EMS professionals.

The following recommendations are general guidelines that will assist in reducing exposure to infectious diseases in the commission of EMS treatment of patients.

1. Follow immunization recommendations from Centers for Disease Control Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) (eg. Hepatitis B and Flu vaccinations).
2. Always be prepared for isolation from body substances (blood, respiratory secretions, sputum, saliva, emesis, fecal matter).
3. Wear examination gloves (in most situations, non-sterile type) during patient care activities.
4. If patient conditions tolerate, reduce exposure of suspected infectious respiratory droplets by covering the patient's nose and mouth in oxygen administration (eg. non-rebreather mask) or with a face mask (eg. surgical type face mask) if oxygen administration is not required.
5. When providing airway assessment and management, maximize the functional distance between the patient's nose and mouth and the EMS professional's nose and mouth. The greater the possible distance, the lesser the risk of respiratory illness transmission.
6. Wear appropriate body substance isolation (eye splash protection, mask over nose/mouth, gloves as previously noted, gown to protect personal uniform contamination) as patient suspected illness/injury may dictate.
7. During treatment of the patient, avoid likely trajectories of bleeding, coughing, spitting, vomiting, defecating whenever possible.
8. Exercise extremely diligent action when handling or around the handling of contaminated sharps (eg. IV/IO needles, needle/syringe, glucometry lancets) and have appropriate sharps container readily present at patient side and on ambulance.
9. For all exposures, wash exposed area(s) as soon as possible with copious irrigation and/or antibacterial solution approved for that area(s) use.
10. In the event of exposure, follow general principles as listed in Protocol 9G – Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Recommendations as well as agency-specific policies. Do not delay in reporting and seeking treatment for an infectious disease/body substance exposure of concern.