

# Communicable/Infectious Diseases

## Safety

### Policy:

- 1.1 Sharing Places Inc. (SPI) is committed to minimising the risk of communicable/infectious diseases to the staff and participants. To this end SPI uses organisational procedures to minimise contact with possible sources of communicable/infectious disease.
- 1.2 **Definition:** Infection is caused by pathogens (bugs) such as bacteria, viruses, protozoa or fungi getting into or onto the body. It can take some time before the microbes multiply enough to trigger symptoms of illness, which means an infected person may unwittingly be spreading the disease during this incubation period. Infection control in the workplace is aimed at preventing pathogens from coming into contact with a person/persons.
- 1.3 Transmission of infection can be spread in a variety of ways including:
  - Airborne
  - Contaminated objects or food
  - Skin to skin contact
  - Contact with bodily fluids
- 1.4 The basis of good infection control in the workplace is to assume that everyone is potentially infectious. Proper procedures are to be followed at all times.

### Procedure:

- 2.1 SPI recognises that performing its service function may entail some exposure of communicable diseases to its staff and participants. In order to minimise this, SPI will:
  - maintain its equipment to minimise the chance of airborne and waterborne contamination to the environment, its staff and the participants;
  - educate staff in appropriate procedures to manage communicable hazards;
  - provide protective equipment where contact with potentially infected material occurs or may occur;
  - inform and encourage staff to be vaccinated against infectious diseases;



- provide (at cost to SPI) opportunity for staff to receive Hepatitis A and B vaccinations;
- isolate and treat infections appropriately where there is risk to staff and participants. To maximise isolation of infections and protect others, the families/carers of individual participants who are presenting with symptoms of infectious/communicable illness will be notified and required to collect the participant immediately from the service environment. Staff presenting with symptoms of infectious/communicable illness will be required to exclude themselves from the workplace until they recover. **Participants and staff are to be excluded based on infectious conditions and exclusion periods specified under the ACT Public Health Regulations 2000 (see Attachment 1 for extracts from the regulation);**
- require written clearance from a medical practitioner for a participant and staff member to return to the service after suffering from a contagious disease acknowledged in the ACT Public Health Regulations 2000; and
- ensure that there is no discrimination against infected persons.

### 3.0 Personal Hygiene

- 3.1 Hand washing – the spread of many pathogens can be prevented with regular hand washing. Hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and water for at least 15 seconds after visiting the toilet, and before preparing food. Disposable paper towels should be used to dry hands.
- 3.2 Any cuts or abrasions should be covered with a waterproof dressing
- 3.3 Disposable gloves should be worn when handling body fluids or equipment containing body fluids, if touching broken skin or mucous membrane or performing any other invasive procedure.
- 3.4 Personal items such as towels, clothing, razors, toothbrushes, shavers should not be shared.

### 4.0 Food Preparation

- 4.1 Wash hands before and after preparing food.
- 4.2 Avoid touching hair, nose and mouth when preparing food.
- 4.3 Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.
- 4.4 Wash all utensils and preparation areas thoroughly with hot water and detergent.

### 5.0 Cleanliness in the Workplace

- 5.1 Regularly wash floors, bathrooms and surfaces with hot water and detergent.
- 5.2 Mops, brushes and cloths should be washed and dried after every use.
- 5.3 Use disinfectants to clean up blood and other spills of bodily fluids.



5.4 When using disinfectants always wear gloves.

## **6.0 AIDS/HIV Infection**

6.1 Sharing Places recognises that HIV cannot be acquired by person-to-person casual contact. Normal social and work contact is safe. The virus is not transmitted through day-to-day personal interaction such as sharing toilets, showers, telephones, hugging or handshaking. The reason for this is that the virus is not present on the intact skin of a person with HIV. The virus also undergoes rapid inactivation following the drying of bodily fluids or by being outside its own environment.

6.2 Sharing Places recognises HIV/AIDS infection as a serious problem and is committed to minimising its transmission and impact on its employees and the participants.

6.3 Sharing Places will provide factual, up-to-date information about HIV/AIDS to its employees as part of its commitment to employee education.

6.4 Sharing Places will treat HIV/AIDS infected employees in the same way as employees with other serious life threatening diseases.

- Confidentiality will be maintained for medical information. This means the information is restricted to the person to whom it is given. This person may only give the information to any other person if the employee's consent is obtained beforehand.
- Employees may remain at work as long as they are fit and willing to do so.

6.5 AIDS/HIV infected employees, or those who are thought to be so infected, are entitled to protection from discrimination in the workplace.

6.6 There will be no compulsory screening for HIV infection.

## **7.0 Hepatitis A and B Infection**

7.1 Sharing Places recognises infection with the Hepatitis A and B virus is a significant Australian public health problem and is committed to reducing further transmission of infection amongst its employees and the participants.

7.2 People with Hepatitis A and B illness should not be treated differently from any other person with an infectious disease.

7.3 Safe work practices to prevent the transmission of the Hepatitis A and B virus from potentially infectious material should be used at all times.

7.4 All employees will be offered Hepatitis A and B vaccinations, paid for by SPI.

7.5 All employees of Sharing Places are trained in safe procedures which minimise the risk of transmission of all infections, including Hepatitis A and B.

7.6 Hepatitis A and B screening will not be required as part of an assessment of fitness for work.

7.7 Confidentiality will be strictly maintained regarding all medical and personal information, including immunisation and blood tests.



**Responsibility:**

Executive Director  
Managers  
OH&S Committee  
Staff

**Relevant Forms:**

N/A

**Related Policies:**

- Work Health and Safety
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Risk Management

Date Endorsed: May 2010	Review Date: (Should be reviewed within 3 to 5 years of endorsement)	Approval Signature: .....
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**Periods of Exclusion relating to infectious conditions.**

Personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, covering weeping sores, not sharing food or drinks and not attending Sharing Places when ill or suffering from diarrhea are important means of limiting the transmission of a number of infectious conditions.

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Exclusion of person with condition</b>	<b>Exclusion of persons in contact with condition</b>
Amoebiasis (entamoeba histolytica)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Campylobacteriosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Chicken Pox (varicella and herpes zoster)	Exclude until the blister has scabbed over. The person should not continue to be excluded by reason only of some remaining scabs.	Not excluded Any person with an immune deficiency (eg with leukemia, or as a result of receiving chemotherapy) should be excluded for their own protection and seek urgent medical advice and varicella-zoster immunoglobulin (ZIG), if necessary.
Conjunctivitis (acute infection)	Exclude until discharge from eyes ceases	Not excluded
*Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Diphtheria	Exclude until – (a) at least 2 negative throat swabs have been taken (the first not less than 24 hours after the cessation of antibiotic treatment and the second not less than 48 hours later) and (b) a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Exclude family and household contacts until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer
Giardiasis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
* <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib)	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded



Hand Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude if (a) person is unwell, or (b) person is drooling, and not all blisters have dried or an exposed weeping blister is not covered with a dressing.	Not excluded
* Hepatitis A	Exclude for at least 7days after the onset of jaundice and a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Herpes (cold sores)	Exclude persons unable to comply with good hygiene practices while the lesion is weeping. Lesion to be covered by a dressing in all cases, if possible.	Not excluded
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced and sores on exposed surfaces are covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not Excluded
*Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after the rash appears.	(a) Immunised contacts not excluded. (b) Exclude non-immunised contacts until 14 days after the first day of appearance of the rash in the index case. (c ) Non-immunised contacts immunized with measles vaccine within 72 hours after their first contact with the index case are not excluded after being immunised.
Meningitis (bacterial)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has commenced.	(a) Not excluded if receiving rifampicin or other antibiotic treatment recommended by the Chief Health Officer. (b) Otherwise, excluded until 10 days after last contact with the index case.
*Mumps	Exclude for 9 days after onset of symptoms, or until parotid swelling	Not excluded



	goes down (whichever is sooner)	
*Poliomyelitis	Exclude for at least 14 days after onset of symptoms and until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (lice), trachoma	Exclude until effective treatment has commenced	Not excluded
Rotavirus	Exclude until diarrhea ceases	Not excluded
*Rubella (German Measles)	Exclude for 4 days after the appearance of the rash.	Not excluded Female staff of child-bearing age should ensure that their immune status against rubella is adequate.
*Salmonellosis	Exclude until diarrhea ceases	Not excluded
*Shigellosis	Exclude until diarrhea ceases	Not excluded
Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has recovered or has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours.	Not excluded
*Tuberculosis	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded
*Typhoid and paratyphoid fever	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	(a) Not excluded unless the Chief Health Officer notifies the person in charge of the school. (b) If the Chief Health Officer gives notice, exclusion is subject to the conditions in the notice.



*Whooping cough (pertussis)	Exclude for 21 days from start of cough, or for at least 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer.	Exclude non-immunised household, for 14 days after the last exposure to infection, or until 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer. (whichever is sooner)
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded

A parent/carer of a person with a listed exclusion condition, or a person who has been in contact with a listed exclusion condition must notify Sharing Places as soon as possible.

\* These conditions must be notified by medical practitioners to the Chief Health Officer.