

OCCUPATIONAL INFECTIONS

The most common occupational infections of concern in the health sector are tuberculosis, hepatitis B and C, HIV/AIDS and respiratory infections (coronaviruses, influenza).



Key facts

- ✓ Needlestick injuries contribute to 39%, 37% and 4.4% of hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV infections respectively.
- ✓ The prevalence of acute hepatitis B infection among health workers globally is 5.3%.
- ✓ About 54% of health workers in low- and middle-income countries have latent TB infection.

Preventive measures:

- ✓ Adhere to strict infection prevention and control measures.
- ✓ Observe standard precautions for infection control - hand washing, respiratory hygiene, safe collection and disposal of health-care waste, environmental hygiene and use of personal protective equipment.
- ✓ Use safety-engineered devices and follow good practices for safe injections.
- ✓ Provide immunization at no cost to health workers. WHO recommendations on health workers' vaccinations include Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG), hepatitis B, polio, pertussis, diphtheria, measles, rubella, meningococcal, influenza, varicella, COVID-19 and cholera.
- ✓ Provide health services for early detection, diagnosis, treatment, counselling and rehabilitation for HIV and TB.
- ✓ Provide systematic latent TB infection testing and treatment for health workers in countries with a low TB incidence.
- ✓ Ensure adequate ventilation in all indoor health-care settings.
- ✓ Consider the use of ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) for disinfection and prevention of airborne pathogens.
- ✓ Use clinical triage for early identification of patients with respiratory infections to prevent transmission.
- ✓ Ensure adequate supply, proper use and maintenance of well fitted personal protective equipment.

Source:

<https://www.who.int/tools/occupational-hazards-in-health-sector/occupational-infections>

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<https://www.who.int/activities/protecting-health-and-safety-of-health-workers>

