

NIOSH Hazardous Drug Exposures in Healthcare Program

May 2016

What are our priorities?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Hazardous Drug Exposures in Healthcare Program works with partners in government, industry, labor, trade associations, professional organizations, and academia. The program focuses on reducing occupational exposures to hazardous drugs in healthcare workers.

What do we do?

- Identify newly approved drugs that may pose an occupational hazard with support from an expert panel and public and stakeholder input.
- Update the “NIOSH List of Antineoplastic and Other Hazardous Drugs in Healthcare Settings” every two years.
- Develop guidelines, education tools, and other resources that can be utilized to reduce exposures to hazardous drugs.
- Produce new and improved methods to assess occupational exposure to hazardous drugs.
- Partner with external groups and other NIOSH Programs to widely disseminate exposure prevention tools (such as Alerts, Workplace Solutions, Current Intelligence Bulletins, and Topic Pages).
- Identify future research directions in collaboration with other NIOSH programs and external partners.

What have we accomplished?

- Identified gaps in healthcare workers’ knowledge about drug hazards and proper use of protective gloves and gowns. This information will be used to develop educational materials.
- Provided guidance to healthcare workers on the selection of properly tested gloves and gowns for use when handling hazardous drugs.
- Published an article in an industrial hygiene trade magazine to raise awareness about hazardous drug exposures and how to prevent them.
- Developed two drug-detection monitors that can measure surface contamination levels of hazardous drugs in the workplace in near real-time. Previously, sampling results could take several weeks to obtain.
- Developed wipe sampling methods for two hazardous drugs, mitomycin and carmustine. Workplace surface exposures to these drugs can now be measured and when warranted, targeted interventions applied.

What’s next?

- Publish 2016 update to NIOSH Alert on hazardous drugs.
- Publish Current Intelligence Bulletin on alternative duty for reproductive status to provide guidance for employers on how to protect pregnant and breastfeeding women and their babies.
- Field test a direct-reading device for measuring hazardous drugs on surfaces in hospitals and other healthcare facilities.
- Publish 2016 update of the NIOSH list of hazardous drugs to reflect the latest research findings about negative health effects.

At-A-Glance

The Hazardous Drug Exposures in Healthcare Program’s mission is to identify and prevent hazardous exposures to pharmaceutical drugs in the healthcare workers that prepare and administer these medications. This snapshot shows recent accomplishments and upcoming work.

State Activities Based on NIOSH Alert, “Preventing Occupational Exposure to Antineoplastic and Other Hazardous Drugs in Healthcare Settings”

