Infection Control Practices For Multidose Medication Vials (5/03)


The purpose of this investigation was to identify the source of an outbreak of acute hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection among three patients occurring within eight weeks of hospitalization in the same ward of a Florida hospital. The outbreak of HCV probably occurred when a multidose saline vial was contaminated with blood from an HCV-infected patient. **Adherence to standard procedures to prevent bloodborne infections should continue to be emphasized. In addition, using single-dose vials or pre-filled syringes might further reduce the risk for nosocomial transmission of bloodborne pathogens.**

DIS Comment: This is not the first report of a nosocomial transmission of a bloodborne pathogen disease from a multidose medication vial. Although this outbreak was related to an in-patient hospital setting, it is possible for this to occur in an outpatient dental setting where multidose medication vials are used for conscious sedation. When using either single-dose or multidose medication vials attention to aseptic technique is critical. Leftover contents from a single-dose vial or syringe should be disposed of appropriately and never be administered to another patient, even if a new sterile device is used to enter the container. If using a multidose medication vial, cleanse the access diaphragm with 70% alcohol before inserting a sterile device into the vial, avoid contaminating the device before penetrating the access diaphragm, and discard the contents immediately if the sterility is compromised.

Selected Reference