

Department of Health
and Social Security

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**PRESS
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Telephone 01-407 5522

Issued jointly with the Health and Safety Executive 25 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DT.
Tel: 01-262 3277

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AIDS GUIDELINES FOR CLINICAL AND LABORATORY STAFF

Health Ministers and the Health and Safety Commission have authorised the publication of interim guidelines on AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) drawn up by the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP). These guidelines set out the measures which should be taken to protect people who, because of their work, come into contact with patients suffering from AIDS or with specimens taken from them.

It is essential that patients suffering from this newly-recognised and serious disease are provided with the best possible care, and also, that those who might, by the nature of their work, be exposed to infection know about necessary safeguards.

These guidelines represent the considered view of the Advisory Committee at this time of how the balance between the dangers and appropriate protective measures should be weighed. However, rapid advances are taking place in our knowledge and understanding of the disease, and for this reason the guidelines are interim.

The Advisory Committee will be reviewing the measures recommended in the guidelines within the next twelve months. They will take into account any new scientific information, together with evidence or comments submitted by health care workers, researchers in the field or other interested parties.

Copies of the interim guidelines on AIDS are being distributed within the health service and can be obtained without charge from the DHSS-MED SEB, Room 1004 Hannibal House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1 6TE or the HSE, MDA2, Room 14.17, 25 Chapel Street, London NW1 5DT.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens consists of representatives of employers, employees and scientific and medical experts. It was set up in 1981 to advise Health and Agriculture Ministers and the Health and Safety Commission on matters concerning all classes of pathogens dangerous to humans.

() A pathogen is a micro-organism which causes disease.

AIDS is short for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It destroys the body's immune system which normally protects against infections and other illnesses. A virus, known as HTLV III, has been identified as a causative agent of AIDS.