

# VOMIT CAN BE DANGEROUS



## Q: Why is vomit a biohazard?

**A:** Vomit at work is usually unexpected and can soon become hard to ignore. The first inclination is to clean it up as quickly as possible to remove bad sights and smells. It's what we can't see that might be most harmful. While it's natural for us to treat blood with extreme caution, we tend to think of vomit as harmless and less risky. Like all body fluids, vomit can present a set of serious risks. For the safety of employees, customers and other guests, always maintain a healthy respect for the potential dangers associated with coming into contact with vomit.

### Serious Illness



Vomiting is the involuntary emptying of your stomach contents through your mouth. Vomiting is not a disease but rather a symptom of an underlying health condition. Vomiting can be the result of food poisoning or an infection like Norovirus or the flu. Vomit often means that the person it came from was sick and needs to be treated by a medical professional.

### Contagious Bacteria And Viruses



Some bacteria and pathogens that cause vomiting can actually be found in our vomit after an episode. When others come into contact with these pathogens via a contaminated surface, the illnesses can be spread rapidly in a workplace. Vomiting is a natural function to rid our bodies of toxins. Vomit is our body's way of working to get rid of things that may cause harm.

### Blood



Vomit is also dangerous because it often times contains blood even if the blood isn't visible with the naked eye. Like vomit, blood can contain a host of dangerous and contagious diseases like HIV and hepatitis. Even small amounts of blood can represent a serious health risk. Exposure to vomit and blood may increase the risk of infection.

### Contaminated Surfaces



Often times, vomiting comes when we least expect it and comes with great force. In severe cases, stomach contents can be propelled up to twenty- five feet. It's also more likely this projectile vomiting will come on suddenly with little or no warning. These episodes of vomiting can result in body fluids reaching surfaces that are at quite a distance. Any vomit that we fail to remove can remain on and contaminate hard surfaces and other employees for days or weeks.