

## **Policy on Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards**

### **I. PURPOSE**

UPSOM seeks to prevent medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards through education and use of appropriate procedures and engineering controls, and provides prophylaxis therapy if students are exposed to infectious agents.

### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

Medical students

### **III. POLICY**

Students must receive education and training regarding the methods of prevention of exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. Instruction will include the use of adequate barrier protection (gloves, safety glasses, mask, gown, etc.), sharps precautions, and hand washing/hygiene, as well as other relevant health care worker standards put forth by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Students are required to complete this training at the start of their medical education and at the start of each curriculum year.

Post-exposure, students are instructed to seek medical care immediately and to report the incident to their immediate supervisor and the Office of Student Affairs. Specific procedures for care and treatment after exposure is described in the Procedure on Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards.

Students are required to maintain active health insurance to cover health needs related to such exposures.

### **IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)**

- Office of Student Affairs

## **V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- Procedure on Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards
- University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual, Reporting Exposure to Potentially Infectious Material to the University of Pittsburgh, EH&S Guideline Number 05-005

## **VI. REFERENCES**

LCME Element 12.8: Student Exposure Policies/Procedures: A medical school has policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, including the following:

- The education of medical students about methods of prevention
- The procedures for care and treatment after exposure, including a definition of financial responsibility
- The effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities

All registered medical students (including visiting students) are informed of these policies before undertaking any educational activities that would place them at risk.

## **VII. APPROVALS**

Education Policy Council, March 21, 2018

Dean, School of Medicine, March 31, 2018

## VIII. PROCEDURE

### Initial Treatment of an Exposure Site

- Wounds and skin sites that have been in contact with blood or body fluids should be washed with soap and water for 3-5 minutes
- Small wounds and punctures may be cleansed with an antiseptic such as an alcohol-based hand hygiene agent, since alcohol is viricidal to HIV, HBV, and HCV.
- Mucous membranes should be flushed with water for 15 minutes, preferably at an eye wash station. Contacts should be removed and discarded.

### After Initial Post-Exposure Actions are Taken

The student should work with their resident and/or attending physician and the charge nurse (as applicable) to assure that appropriate labs are drawn on the source patient. If the student encounters difficulty in getting the source patient's labs performed, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Student Health Services at 412-383-1800. They are located at 119 University Place in Nordenberg Hall.

### **Student Health Services Hours (fall, winter, spring semesters):**

Monday and Thursday 9am-7pm  
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am-5pm  
Saturday 10am-3pm

### **Summer Hours:**

Monday through Friday 9am-5pm

If the exposure occurs after-hours or over the weekend, the student should call UPMC Employee Health on-call line at 833-280-8511 for initial guidance. A member of the on-call team will assess the injury, determine the significance of the exposure for the potential to transmit HBV, HCV, and HIV based on the type of body substance involved and the route and severity of the exposure, and provide over-the-phone counseling to assess the need to start PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) medication. Students should *also* leave a message with Student Health to let them know of the situation and schedule an appointment, as student health is the main point of contact for students who experience a needle stick or other injury while on clinical experiences. If the injury is severe enough, the student should proceed to the nearest emergency room for evaluation.

Students rotating at locations more than fifteen (15) miles away from the Oakland Campus should receive initial evaluation and testing at their away site (as outlined in the affiliation agreement for the site or via arrangements made prior to their rotation by the Clerkship Director).

### Reporting an Exposure

Students experiencing an occupational exposure must report the incident to the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Medical Education within two (2) calendar days of the exposure by sending an email to [studentaffairs@medschool.pitt.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@medschool.pitt.edu).

### Responsibility for Cost of Treatment

Students are required to maintain active health insurance coverage while enrolled at PittSOM and are responsible for all costs of any follow-up evaluation and treatment that might be required, including, but not limited to, lab work, medications for PEP, HBV hyperimmune globulin, and HBV vaccination.

Students are responsible for all medical costs related to occupational exposures that occur at sites away from UPMC facilities.

### Return to Educational Activities

Students are allowed to return to educational activities following an exposure or illness once cleared by a provider based on current professional (CDC) guidelines.

The School of Medicine, in conjunction with Student Health or the student's physician, will provide reasonable accommodation whenever possible to facilitate a return to educational activities.

In the event that students are unable to return or are not cleared by their physician to return to educational activities, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs will meet with the student to discuss alternative options and provide resources and support.