

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 first step is always to call the UPMC Employee Health on-call line at 833-280-8511 (available 24/7) 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.

- **If the incident occurred at a UPMC facility during work hours:** Students should provide the name of the resident, attending physician, and the source patient to ensure that appropriate labs are drawn. The student may be directed to the appropriate UPMC Employee Health Services office (or the appropriate UPMC hospital emergency department) for initial evaluation and treatment.
- If the incident occurred **after work hours** or at a **non-UPMC facility**, students should still call the UPMC Employee Health line above for initial guidance. Students may be advised to visit the nearest emergency department. Students should work with the facility's resident and/or attending physician to follow the host site's protocols on exposure and/or source patient testing. Students rotating at locations more than fifteen (15) miles away from the Oakland Campus can typically 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).

Responsibility for Cost of Treatment

Initial evaluation and treatment at UPMC Employee Health Services, as well as source patient lab testing at a UPMC facility, come at no cost to the student.

Any emergency department visit (at any UPMC or non-UPMC facility), all follow-up treatments, and medications will be billed to the student's personal health insurance. Students should provide their personal insurance information when seeking treatment. **Note: Students are not UPMC employees and should not identify themselves as such for billing purposes when seeking treatment. If you receive an unexpected bill, contact the Office of Student Affairs, which will work with UPMC Employee Health to investigate.**

Students who require follow-up treatment in the Pittsburgh area should visit the University of Pittsburgh Student Health Services, located at 119 University Place in Nordenberg Hall (412-383-1800).

Student Health Services Hours (fall and spring semesters):

Monday and Thursday 9am-7pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 9am-5pm

Saturday 10am-3pm

Summer Hours:

Monday through Friday 9am-5pm

Students are required to maintain active health insurance while enrolled at PittSOM.

Reporting an Exposure to the School of Medicine

After completing the steps above to seek treatment, students 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 Dr. Michael Rizzi at rizzim@pitt.edu.

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