

## **Policy on Infectious Disease Prevention: Exposures, Immunizations, and Bloodborne Pathogens**

### **I. PURPOSE**

UPSOM seeks to prevent medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, and to prevent the spread of infectious disease from students to colleagues, patients, and others in educational or clinical settings.

To protect themselves, their colleagues and patients, students must provide evidence of immunization or immunity against infectious diseases.

Students who are or who become ill or disabled with a bloodborne pathogen will be provided with reasonable schedule adjustments and accommodations as with any other illness or disability.

### **II. SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- Medical students

### **III. POLICY**

Students are required to complete training regarding the methods of prevention of exposure to infectious and environmental hazards at the start of their medical education and during each curriculum year.

#### **Exposures**

In the event of exposure to infectious or environmental hazards, students are instructed to seek medical care immediately and to report the incident to their immediate supervisor and to the Office of Student Affairs, as described the under “Procedures” below.

Students are required to maintain active health insurance throughout their enrollment at UPSOM to cover healthcare needs related to such exposures.

#### **Immunizations and Tuberculosis Testing**

As described under “Procedures” below, all students are required to have specific immunizations, or a positive titer, by the stated deadlines.

All students are required to undergo testing for tuberculosis prior to matriculation and annually, as described under “Procedures” below.

Students are required to update their student immunization record annually.

Subject to approval by the UPSOM Student Health Committee (SHC) or another designated school official, students may be exempted from vaccination requirements in the following cases:

1. If they object on the grounds that administration of immunizing agents conflicts with their religious practices (unless the federal, state, or local Department of Health has declared an emergency or an epidemic of disease).
2. If they present a statement from a licensed physician stating that administration of a required immunizing agent would be detrimental to their health.

If an exemption is approved, the UPSOM cannot guarantee that our affiliated hospitals and clinics will allow the student to participate in patient care at these affiliated sites. Therefore, UPSOM is not able to guarantee progression to graduation for individuals who do not obtain immunizations and comply with other requirements of our affiliated health systems for participation in clinical experiences.

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

- Office of Student Affairs

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

Policy on Health Insurance, Student Health Services, and Disability Insurance.

- 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

#### **VII. APPROVALS**

Educational Policy Council approved on March 3, 2026.

## VIII. PROCEDURES

### Exposure to Infectious or Environmental Hazards

#### 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 (May-August):

Monday through Friday 9am-5pm

**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 within two (2) calendar days of the exposure by sending an email to Dr. Michael Rizzi at [rizzim@pitt.edu](mailto: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 Services and/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 for Student Affairs will meet with the student to discuss alternative options and provide resources and support .

**Required Immunizations and Tuberculosis Testing**

**Required at Matriculation:**

- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
  - 2 doses of the combined MMR vaccine
    - OR 2 Measles, 2 Mumps, 1 Rubella vaccinations
    - OR positive titers demonstrating immunity to Measles, Mumps, and Rubella

- If BOTH evidence of vaccination and titer data are submitted, and the titers do not demonstrate immunity, the student will be required to re-immunize against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella
- Varicella (Chickenpox)
  - 2 doses of Varicella vaccine.
    - OR a positive titer demonstrating immunity
  - NOT ACCEPTED: Documented history of having had chickenpox – a titer is required in that case.
  - If BOTH evidence of vaccination and titer data are submitted, and the titers do not demonstrate immunity, the student will be required to re-immunize against Varicella.
- Hepatitis B
  - 3 doses of Hep B vaccine AND a Quantitative Surface Antibody titer demonstrating adequate immunity.
  - IF THE TITER IS NEGATIVE: Students must get additional vaccinations to provide a positive titer. This second vaccination series can take several months to complete, so know your status and plan ahead.
- Tdap Adult
  - The Tdap vaccination on record must be within the past 10 years.
- TB Screening
  - PPD or Quantiferon TB Gold test (preferred for all, especially those previously vaccinated with BCG), dated after May 1st of the year of matriculation.
  - IF THE STUDENT HAS A HISTORY OF TB, OR OF POSITIVE PPD RESULTS, OR AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO THE MANTOUX SOLUTION, the student should not get PPD tests. Instead, a clear chest x-ray from within three (3) months of the matriculation date should be submitted. Also, an annual symptom questionnaire will be required to be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs. If the student has have any symptoms described in the questionnaire, the student should follow the instructions about further examination.
- Covid-19 Vaccine
  - The University of Pittsburgh requires all students to be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 SARS-CoV-2 virus at the time of matriculation.
  - Students are required to adhere to any updated University of Pittsburgh's policy on COVID-19 vaccinations that occur throughout the academic year.
  - If the student cannot get the COVID-19 vaccine for medical reasons, a medical exemption request must be completed by the student's physician. See the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

**Required Annually throughout Enrollment in Medical School:**

- TB Symptom Questionnaire – For those with a history of TB or a prior positive test, the TB symptom questionnaire will need to be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Affairs annually.
  - Follow-up on any suspected TB symptoms with a medical professional immediately.

- TB Screening
  - PPD or Quantiferon TB Gold test (preferred for all, especially those previously vaccinated with BCG), dated after May 1st of the year of matriculation.
  - IF THE STUDENT HAS A HISTORY OF TB, OR OF POSITIVE PPD RESULTS, OR AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO THE MANTOUX SOLUTION, the student should not get PPD tests. Instead, a clear chest x-ray from within three (3) months of the beginning of the academic year (that is, before November 1) should be submitted. Also, an annual symptom questionnaire will be required to be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs. If the student has any symptoms described in the questionnaire, the student should follow the instructions about further examination.
  
- Flu Shot every year before flu season begins (September – mid-October)
  - All students must provide documentation of an annual flu shot to the Office of Student Affairs.
  - If the student cannot get the flu shot for medical reasons, a medical exemption form must be completed by the student's physician. See the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

### **Required Every 10 Years**

- Adult Tdap vaccination must be updated 10 years after the previous dose.
  - Documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs once completed.

### **Students Infected with Bloodborne Pathogens**

The clinical experiences of a medical student infected with a bloodborne pathogen (e.g. HIV, HCV or HBV) should be limited only when (1) there is evidence to suggest that the student poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others and/or (2) the direct threat cannot be eliminated or reduced to a medically acceptable level with reasonable accommodation. Medical students who are infected with HIV, HCV, and/or HBV are advised not to perform exposure-prone procedures without guidance from the UPSOM Student Health Committee (SHC) or another designated school official.

The school may become aware that a student has an infectious/contagious disease or disability that interferes with education/patient care in various ways. These include but are not limited to:

- Student self-disclosure at the time of matriculation, or
- At the time of an annual health review.

When the school becomes aware of a student with this type of disease or disability, the student's circumstances will be evaluated by the Student Health Committee (SHC) or another designated school official. The SHC may consult with representatives from the Dean's Office, University of Pittsburgh Office of General Counsel, and health care professionals with relevant expertise, including but not limited to representatives from UPMC Infection Prevention and Control, UPMC Risk Management, and UPMC Clinical Administration. In consultation with those

experts, the SHC will evaluate compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and recommendations from authoritative agencies on the practice of health care workers with communicable infectious diseases (e.g. HIV, HCV, HBV, etc.). The SHC will make recommendations to the Dean or designee about any restrictions that may be needed and any special support the student will need, and may arrange for counseling to the student.

The identity of the infected student will be kept strictly confidential. Records of the committee review and recommendations will be kept in a confidential file by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.

**The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine reserves the right to change these policies and procedures as needed.**