

Policy Number	UME.HS.104
Policy Title	Communicable/Infectious Disease/Environmental Exposure in the Clinical Learning Environment and Needlestick Protocol
Effective Date	11/2000
Last Revision Date (if any)	12/11/2023
Scope	All (Faculty, Students, Staff)
LCME Element(s) (if any)	12.8

Communicable/Infectious Disease/Environmental Exposure in the Clinical Learning Environment and Needlestick Protocol

I. PURPOSE

In the course of their educational program, students may participate in the care of infectious patients or be exposed to environmental hazards. Students must be aware of the risks stemming from contact with the secretions, blood, and bodily fluids of any patient, and those coming from being exposed to hazardous chemicals. If exposure, needlestick, or other wound should occur, students must follow this protocol.

NOTE: Drug prophylaxis following a high-risk exposure is time sensitive. Immediately seek help from the appropriate hospital department.

II. SCOPE

All undergraduate medical students.

III. POLICY

Students who are exposed to blood-borne, fluid-borne, or air-borne pathogens or chemicals must follow this process and any clinical site-specific protocols.

Students who matriculate into medical school with a communicable disease must contact and disclose to Occupational Health *prior* to the start of Orientation Week to ensure student and patient safety in all clinical encounters.

Email: OccupationalMedicine@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

Phone: 1-800-789-7366

Students must complete and comply with all required online learning modules and in-person trainings on personal safety and environmental exposures including formaldehyde and radiation exposure.

IV. PROCESS

IMMEDIATE ACTION

COMMUNICABLE/INFECTIOUS DISEASE EXPOSURE: Universal guidelines for exposure to communicable disease should be initiated immediately. Depending on the type of exposure and clinical site, specific protocols may be required. Students should immediately notify their supervisory resident or attending and notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Wellness and the COO of APO as soon as reasonably possible.

NEEDLESTICK: Wash the affected area with soap and water and, if possible, cover it with a dressing. For ocular exposure, flush thoroughly with water. Inform the supervising resident, and report at once to the areas described below.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS: A student who is exposed to a hazardous chemical or high level radiation shall inform the faculty member supervising the course or clinical service and follow the immediate action plan described below.

IMMEDIATE FOLLOWUP ACTION BY CLINICAL SITE

At HUP and the VA

1. Go directly to HUP's or the VA's Occupational Medicine Division.
 - a. If the site closed at either location, report immediately to the HUP or VA Emergency Department.
2. Identify yourself as a medical student who has just sustained an exposure.
3. You will see a health care provider who is trained in assessing exposure risk. If you are seen in the Emergency Room, an occupational medicine doctor is on call 24-hours a day to provide immediate consultation on post-exposure drug treatment and counseling. **Do not hesitate to ask the physician treating you to page the occupational medicine doctor carrying the needlestick pager.**
4. You will be counseled and advised about post-exposure prophylaxis.
5. If indicated, you will be given a starter pack of the prophylactic drugs, which is recommended in accordance with the current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control.
6. Baseline blood tests will be performed on you.
7. The physician at Occupational Health will contact the attending physician of the source patient to expedite consent to test the source patient.
8. **Request a copy of your treatment plan**, including baseline lab work, medications ordered and source-patient results.
9. **Call Student Health Service (SHS) at 215-746-3535** to schedule a non-urgent evaluation **within one (1) week of exposure**, if possible.
10. Bring your treatment plan, baseline lab results, list of medications ordered and source-patient results with you to SHS.
11. You will be given a schedule to return to SHS for follow-up testing.

At Other Hospitals

Proceed to the area listed for the appropriate hospital below.

You will be treated in accordance with that hospital's exposure or needlestick policy for health care workers. These policies for all affiliated hospitals have been reviewed by the director of infection control for HUP and meet established standards. All follow-up testing is performed at Student Health and Wellness Services (SHS). Students must bring their records to SHS, so that appropriate follow-up testing can be scheduled.

- **Children's Hospital of Philadelphia** – Report to Occupational Health Service during weekdays. Report to the Nursing Supervisor on weekends and evenings.
- **Presbyterian Hospital** – Report to Occupational Medicine. If closed, report to the Emergency Room.

- **Pennsylvania Hospital** – Report to Employee Health (Duncan Building Basement). If closed, report to the Emergency Room.
- **Chestnut Hill Hospital** – Report to the Emergency Department and notify Employee Health.
- **Chester County Hospital** – Report to the Emergency Department.
- **Lancaster General Hospital** – Report to the Emergency Department.
- **Reading Hospital** – Report to the Emergency Department.
- **Outpatient Ambulatory Sites** – Report to HUP Occupational Medicine or to its satellite in Radnor, whichever is closer to your site.

Billing Procedures

The Perelman School of Medicine will pay for any charges not covered by your insurance. At the time of service, please provide your insurance information to the hospital. If you receive any invoice(s) for balance payments due, please bring these immediately to the Office of Student Affairs so the Perelman School of Medicine can pay these charges.

Additional Assistance

If you have difficulty getting the consent of the source patient, or any other problems associated with your needlestick, please contact:

DaCarla Albright, MD

Associate Dean, Student Affairs & Wellness

dacarla.albright@pennmedicine.upenn.edu

Cell: [Click here \(pennkey needed\)](#)

Stacey Rose, MD, MEd

Associate Dean, Student Success & Professional Development

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Cell: [Click here \(pennkey needed\)](#)

Anna Delaney, Chief Operating Officer

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V. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

Members of the 2019 Policy Writing Committee in accordance with published guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Revisions made by the Policy sub-committee of the Undergraduate Medical Education Committee.

VI. REFERENCES

[H.R.5178 Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act](#)

[Core 2 Attendance/Absence Policy](#)

[Core 3 Attendance/Absence Policy](#)

[Delaying Exams Due to Illness Policy](#)

VII. GOVERNING BODY

Federal requirement – language of policy approved by the Policy Subcommittee of the Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UMEC), revisions approved by UMEC

VIII. POLICY HISTORY

Date	Change
11/2000	Required by the US Federal Government
08/12/2019	Internal language approved by Module Leaders
08/10/2021	Revised and approved by UMEC
12/11/2023	Revised by PC and approved by UMEC
02/15/2024	Revised by the Office of the Senior Vice Dean for Medical Education
	Approved by UMEC