

	<b>Exposure to Environmental Hazards Policy</b> <b>LCME Element 12.8</b> <b>(Student Exposure Policies/Procedures)</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>11/17/2020</b>
		<b>Current Date:</b>	<b>11/17/2020</b>
		<b>Contact:</b>	<b>Office of Admissions and Student Affairs</b>
<b>Approved By: Executive Faculty</b>		<b>Date Approved:</b>	<b>11/17/2020</b>

**1) GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT**

Tulane University School of Medicine informs medical students (including visiting students) of policies and procedures to address exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before students undertake any educational activities that would place them at risk. Medical students are educated about the methods of prevention, procedures for care and treatment after exposure, including a definition of financial responsibility. All medical students are required to maintain active health insurance and must utilize their health insurance to cover the necessary care and treatment expenses due to such exposure, including evaluation, testing, and treatment costs.

- a) **Scope:** This policy applies to all School of Medicine students.
- b) **Responsible Department/Party/Parties:**
  - i Policy Owner: Office of Admissions and Student Affairs
  - ii Procedure: Office of Admissions and Student Affairs
  - iii Supervision: Dean’s Office

**2) DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this Policy, the following terms and definitions apply:

- An exposure can be defined as a percutaneous injury (*e.g.*, needle stick or cut with a sharp object), contact of eye, mouth or other mucous membrane or non-intact skin (*e.g.*, exposed skin that is chapped, abraded, or with dermatitis) with blood, saliva, tissue, or other body fluids that are potentially infectious.
- Exposure incidents place health care personnel at risk of diseases caused by a range of pathogens including hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, Covid-19 and therefore should be evaluated according to protocol by a qualified health care professional.

### 3) POLICY GUIDELINES

**General Requirements:** Medical students must immediately call the Student Health Center (located in the Elks Building) if exposed. During business hours, students should call 504.988.6929. After hours or on weekends, students should call the Nurse Advice Line at 1.855.487.0290. Visiting medical students should also contact the Student Health Center if exposed. During business hours, the student will either be scheduled a same day visit or a phone consultation with one of the physicians or nurses. After hours, the call will be directed to an all-call health care provider. Students also should report any exposure to their course or clerkship directors as well as the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

#### **Procedures:**

##### **What is an exposure?**

- Percutaneous injury (*e.g.*, needlestick or cut with a sharp object), and/or eye splash or contact with other mucous membrane or non-intact skin (chapped, abraded, or dermatitis) with potentially infectious bodily fluids and other materials including:
  - Blood
  - Semen
  - Vaginal secretions
  - Cerebrospinal fluid
  - Pleural/pericardial/synovial/peritoneal fluid
  - Amniotic fluid
  - Feces
  - Any bodily fluid that may contain blood
  - Significant exposure to Covid+ person (as per CDC guidelines)

##### **If exposed what should I do?**

- Wash needle sticks and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, and skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water or saline
- Obtain as much demographical data on the source patients as possible
- Ask your supervisor to consent the source patient to testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C at the time of exposure or when medically able to obtain consent. If possible, obtain a rapid HIV test on the source patient immediately.
- Covid-19 exposure- quarantine and follow instructions of the Student Health Clinic. This may include Covid-19 PCR testing.
- CALL the Student Health Clinic IMMEDIATELY. During business hours, please call 504.988.6929. You will either be scheduled a same day visit or a phone consultation with one of the physicians or nurses.
- After hours or on weekends ONLY, call the Nurse Advice Line at 1.855.487.0290.

##### **Is there treatment to prevent blood borne disease after exposure?**

- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) – may be prevented by taking post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) medications for up to 4 weeks (if indicated).
- Hepatitis B (HBV) – in persons who have not been vaccinated or in non-responders to the vaccines, post exposure prophylaxis with two doses of HBV immune globulin is recommended.

- Hepatitis C (HCV) – there is no vaccine against hepatitis C and no treatment after an exposure that will prevent infection.

**How soon after an exposure should treatment start?**

- Post exposure treatment for Hepatitis B and HIV should be started as soon as possible, preferably within two hours after the exposure.
- Immediate follow-up with the Health Center even if source patient’s rapid HIV is negative.

**If the source patient is known to be HIV+:**

- Determine the most recent viral load
- Obtain the antiretroviral treatment history, including any drug resistance

**Tuberculosis**

- If a student has an exposure to a person with active pulmonary or laryngeal tuberculosis the Health Center will also provide any necessary tuberculosis testing or other studies at no cost to the student. The following schedule is followed:
  - If they have don’t have a documented result in the previous 3 months the student is tested as soon as possible (within two weeks) following the exposure
  - Follow-up TB skin test placed and read three months following the exposure (for those whose baseline skin test was negative)

**Meningitis**

- For bacterial meningitis, post-exposure prophylaxis is recommended for students who have had intensive, unprotected contact (without wearing a mask) with infected patient’s oral or nasal secretions. The post-exposure evaluation and any needed post-exposure medications are provided at the Health Center.

**Academic Impact**

Students who are infected with any other potentially transmissible disease will not be excluded from participating in patient-care activities, or restricted in their access to patient-care services because of their health status, unless medically-based judgments in individual cases establish that exclusion or restriction is appropriate for the welfare of patients, the welfare of other members of the patient-care community, or the welfare of the individual. Students who have developed a disability as a result of a needlestick or other exposure may require evaluation by the School of Medicine and the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility. Tulane University School of Medicine (TUSOM) fulfills its obligation to educate future physicians while adhering to procedures that maintain the health and safety of patients and that protect the personal rights of medical students with infectious diseases or immunocompromised conditions. Students with infectious or communicable illnesses or with an immune compromising condition should consult with the Student Health Center regarding the advisability of working with patients including any limitations or other concerns as relate to his or her clinical duties and educational activities. Regardless of illness or condition, students must comply with the School of Medicine’s Technical Standards Policy and TUSOM will attempt to provide reasonable accommodation. Failure to meet the standards may require that the student appear before the School of Medicine’s Professionalism and Promotion Committee to determine a plan, as possible, for successful resumption of the medical school curriculum.

Students are provided information and policies concerning needle-stick injuries on the School of Medicine website, and they are additionally provided an information card to affix to the student

identification badge. During the orientation to each academic year and during each clerkship, the directors review needlestick procedures with students. The School of Medicine also supplies facemasks and shields for medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic even though the students will not be caring for COVID-19 positive or suspected positive patients.

### **Visiting Students**

At the time of acceptance, visiting students are notified about the policies and procedures related to exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. During the visiting student orientation process, students receive a copy of the “Policy on Prevention of Infection Following Accidental Exposure”. Visiting medical students follow the same process for exposure as TUSOM students. Visiting students will be treated by the student health center during business hours (504.988.6929) and have access to the Nurse Advice Line after hours and on weekends (1.855.487.0290). Tulane students on away rotations must have active health insurance and will follow the exposure protocols in place at the site of the away rotation.

## **4) REVIEW/REVISION/IMPLEMENTATION**

- a) Review Cycle: This policy shall be reviewed by the Dean’s Office (Office of Admissions and Student Affairs) annually from the effective date.
- b) Office of Record: After authorization, the Dean’s Office (Office of Admissions and Student Affairs) shall be the office of record for this policy.

## **5) RELATED POLICIES**

- Technical Standards Policy

## **6) GOVERNING LAW OR REGULATIONS**

## **7) ATTACHMENTS**