

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
SCHOOL OF NURSING  
ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE  
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

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**TITLE OF POLICY:** **BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS: FACULTY AND STUDENTS**

**ORIGINAL DATE:** **SEPTEMBER 1993**

**LAST REVIEW/REVISION DATE:** **APRIL 2023**

**INTRODUCTION:** Following the recommendation of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the University of Pittsburgh, this policy has been developed regarding responsibilities for adherence to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for prevention of transmission, as well as recognition of individual rights, voluntary testing, and confidentiality of test results and health records for both faculty and students and for those for whom they provide care.

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**POLICY:** EDUCATION

Faculty need to be educated according to current Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines. The Administration/Faculty in the School of Nursing are responsible for disseminating information about blood borne pathogens, their transmission and educating students about the hazards involved in contact with a diverse population in which these diseases may be present. The curriculum must reflect content related to blood borne pathogens and the practice of "transmission-based precautions".

PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION

Students will receive printable and oral information and instructions on transmission-based precautions for body fluids and blood borne infections in accordance with applicable CDC guidelines prior to any exposure to clients, or to laboratory infectious materials, as a part of prerequisite clinical preparation.

Laboratory safety guidelines must be employed for the handling of blood and body fluids of all persons in teaching laboratories. Laboratory courses where exposure to blood is possible must use disposable equipment; this equipment must not be re-used or shared. Disposal of used equipment shall be in accord with university policy.

STRICT ADHERENCE TO TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS

The Guidelines (transmission-based precautions) established by the CDC, the United States Public Health Services, must be strictly adhered to for the protection of students, faculty, and patients.

HBV VACCINATION

Faculty members who might be exposed to blood during clinical supervision of students or during clinical practice will be required to receive HBV vaccination unless they have documented evidence of immunity to the disease or are medically at risk from the vaccine or have signed an informed consent waiver. Faculty who do not have serologic evidence of their immunity to HBV from vaccination or previous exposure should know their hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) status and if positive their hepatitis Be antigen (HBeAg) status.

All School of Nursing students must present evidence of a completed series of HBV immunization within six months of admission to the programs or prior to contact with patients unless they have documented evidence of immunity to the disease or are medically at risk from the vaccine or have signed an informed consent waiver. If students do not have evidence of immunity, placement for clinical practice could be affected.

Faculty/students who refuse to obtain immunization must sign the appropriate waiver stating that they have received information regarding the seriousness of hepatitis B and the recommended virus options but have decided not to obtain the hepatitis B vaccine.

The School of Nursing will not be responsible for student costs of the HBV vaccine. The School of Nursing may cover the costs for students who demonstrate that such an expense would create undue financial hardship.

HIV TESTING

Nursing students and faculty who are at risk for HIV and who have a desire to be tested can avail themselves

of testing and pre and post testing counseling through the Allegheny County Health Department or Student Health Services.

HIV testing requires written informed consent which must be preceded by an explanation of the test, its purposes, potential uses, limitations, and the meaning of results. It is the responsibility of the physician or designee to provide for the informed consent discussion. Pretest counseling must also be provided. Pretest counseling involves making information available to the individual about measures for prevention of exposure to transmission of HIV. Such counseling may be provided either by clinical institutions in the case of an exposure during clinical experiences, by the Allegheny County Health Department, or by Student Health Services. Confirmatory testing is required if the results are positive. The individual who was tested needs to be notified of the test results and provided with an opportunity for post test counseling. Without the express written authorization of the individual, such information may not be disclosed except as provided for in Pennsylvania's Confidentiality of HIV Related Information Act (the Act) effective February 27, 1991. Subsequent disclosure of HIV related information by such persons is prohibited unless authorized by the individual or permitted by the Act. HIV testing records will not be maintained in the School of Nursing.

#### PARTICIPATION IN CARE OF INFECTED PATIENTS

Since nurses provide "services with respect for human dignity and the uniqueness of the client, unrestricted by considerations of social and economic status, personal attributes, or the nature of health problems" (ANA Code of ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements, 2001), faculty or students may not refuse to participate in the care of those patients infected with potential blood borne pathogens or any other type of patient. Under unusual circumstances (such as, the faculty or student having open lesions or weeping dermatitis) this ethical mandate may be reconsidered; health care workers with unusual circumstances should refrain from all direct patient care and from handling equipment until the condition resolves.

Faculty must provide students with education and counseling to reduce student apprehension about caring for individuals who are at risk for or who are infected with blood borne pathogens. The moral obligation of nurses to care for the sick, regardless of the illness, needs to be emphasized. If students refuse to care for individuals who are at risk for or who are infected with blood borne pathogens, career counseling about pursuing a nursing career needs to be offered.

#### MANAGEMENT OF FACULTY OR STUDENTS INFECTED WITH POTENTIAL BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS

Decisions regarding faculty/students who are infectious with a blood borne pathogen will be made on a case-by-case basis considering compliance with transmission-based precautions, health status, CDC recommendations for preventing transmission, and University policy.

#### EXPOSURE TO BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS

Students and faculty members have a responsibility to report to faculty members in charge or designated administrators any incident which exposed them or a patient to risk of transmission of blood borne disease. Faculty or students who are exposed to blood borne pathogens by needle puncture or contact with secretions/body fluids while in the clinical setting should conform to specific agency procedures for such contact. Faculty/students must request an evaluation of the significance of the exposure as soon as possible or within 24 hours after the exposure.

Faculty/students responsibility:

Guidelines for follow-up evaluation and documentation of the exposure should be in accordance to the [SON Policy #302 – Health Incidents](#).

Any questions should be directed to the University of Pittsburgh, Environmental Health and Safety Office, telephone 624-9544.

Related Policies: [Policy #302 - Health Incidents](#)  
University Policy CS 01 Blood Borne Pathogens: [Link](#)

Reviewed/ Revised: 95-96, 07-08, 10-11, 03-14, 16-17, 19-20, 22-23

Approved by TFO: 2/02, 04/08, 04/11, 4/23