

# Student Exposure to Hazards

Students will be exposed to inherent risks while participating in clinical training including possible exposure to blood, tissue or other body or laboratory fluids. The PA Program utilizes guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to address student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. The Program will provide appropriate training to students on infectious and environmental hazards prior to any educational activities that would place students at risk. This policy on infectious and environmental hazards will address methods of prevention; procedures after exposure; financial responsibility; and program participation following exposure.

## Methods of prevention

Standard precautions are taught and implemented to protect healthcare professionals and reduce the risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and hazardous substances from both recognized and unrecognized sources. These precautions apply to all patient care, laboratory, and clinical training experiences. All faculty and students must utilize Standards Precautions in activities that present exposure to bloodborne pathogens and hazardous substances. Failure to do so may be grounds for disciplinary action. Students must avoid direct contact with blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, and possibly contaminated items. Students should also avoid direct contact with sharps and dispose of them in designated puncture-resistant containers directly after use to avoid injury.

## Procedures after possible exposure to blood-borne pathogen(s) or needle stick

The following outlines the procedure to follow in the event of possible exposure to blood-borne pathogen(s) or a needle stick occurs:

- Act as quickly as possible.
- Wash the site of exposure thoroughly with soap and water (or water only for mucous membranes).
- Notify your preceptor at your rotation AND, if applicable, the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g., HBsAG, HCV antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV and HCV status is already known.
- You may be required to complete an incident report. Do NOT fill out a workman's comp or employee health claim
- It is very important to report all exposures and get follow-up care promptly This follow-up care begins with you going to the nearest emergency department
  - After being seen emergently by a healthcare professional, follow up with your primary care provider is recommended to determine if you need post-exposure prophylaxis. If you do not have a PCP, contact Health Services at Austin College at 903.813.2247

- **Needlestick Insurance:** See the Exxat Clinical Phase Administrative Course for your needle stick insurance information and processes for submitting a claim. This needle stick insurance is an incidence-only policy provided to you by the program and is in addition to your regular health insurance. You should use your health insurance when seen initially for the needlestick or in the event of other exposures. See the Student Health Insurance section in this document for more information.
- Notify the PA Program (by contacting the Director of Experiential Learning or Program Director) as soon as possible, no later than the next business day, if the exposure occurs off-campus.
- After medical care has been addressed, the student and faculty member must complete the PA Program Incident Report Form for documentation purposes as part of the student's record.

#### Chemical hazard exposure

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) devised the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) to ensure that information about chemical and toxic substance hazards in the workplace and associated protective measures are disseminated to workers via Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Hazardous Chemicals: any chemical classified as a health hazard or simple asphyxiate in accord with the Hazard Communication Standard.

Students exposed to chemical hazards in classroom laboratories must notify Program Faculty immediately during pre-clinical phase, or their Clinical Preceptor followed by the Director of Experiential Learning if the exposure occurs during clinical phase. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be readily available wherever chemicals are used. The student is responsible for identifying the location of the MSDS information sheets as part of their orientation to each clinic/hospital site where they are rotating. Post-exposure care is dictated by the type of chemical exposure.

Students are strongly recommended to have an evaluation performed by a healthcare provider following any chemical exposure. The protocols set forth at clinical sites should be followed and students should follow the directions given to them by their preceptor.

#### Financial responsibility

For any exposure or injuries that may occur as part of training in the PA Program, please note that the payment for medical evaluation, treatment, and care is the sole responsibility of the student and their insurance carrier.

#### Program participation following exposure

Following an accidental exposure or needlestick injury, the PA Program Director will determine on an individual basis if the student can continue participation in PA Program activities.