

## POLICIES ON COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND IMMUNIZATIONS FOR PHARMACY STUDENTS

### POLICIES<sup>1</sup>

#### STUDENTS

1. The Faculty of Pharmacy will inform students that:
  - they may be required to take part in the care of patients with various communicable diseases including hepatitis, tuberculosis, and HIV, during their clinical rotations;
  - they will be instructed regarding methods of preventing the spread of communicable diseases;
  - there is a risk that they may contract a communicable disease during the course of their rotations;
  - they have a responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases to others;
  - they will be required to comply with Faculty immunization requirements;
  - students with a communicable disease may participate in experiential placements only as long as their (continued) involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or to others;
  - students will be required to comply with provincial communicable diseases surveillance protocols developed under the Public Hospitals Act/Regulation 965;
  - students may be required to give body fluid specimens if they are exposed to or contract certain diseases while working in practice site

#### STUDENTS WITH A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

1. All students are expected to be in a state of health such that they may participate in the academic program, including patient care, without posing a risk to themselves or to others. Students with a communicable disease may participate in experiential placements only as long as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or others.
2. Students who acquire a communicable disease are required to seek medical opinion.
3. In addition to complying with other regulations, students with tuberculosis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV infection must provide documentation to Synergy Gateway Verified, from their primary care provider confirming the disclosed condition is being appropriately managed.<sup>2</sup>
4. The health status of the students shall remain confidential.

#### STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN CARE OF PATIENTS WITH COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

1. Students are required to participate in the care of all patients assigned to them, including patients with communicable diseases, to a level commensurate with their level of training. Such participation is necessary for the student's learning as well as for satisfactory completion of academic requirements.
2. All students are expected to understand and adhere to infection control policies, including the principles of body substance precautions, when participating in the assessment and care of all patients, regardless of the patient's diagnosis.
3. Students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner which is consistent with the health and safety of themselves and others and shall be given appropriate training to do so. Students who fail to meet these responsibilities

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<sup>1</sup> This document is drawn in large part from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto's 'Policy Regarding Communicable Diseases and Occupational Health For Applicants To and Students Of the Undergraduate Medical Program, the Program in Occupational Therapy and the Program in Physical Therapy.'  
<https://temertymedicine.utoronto.ca/sites/default/files/Guidelines%20re.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> 'Guideline on the Prevention of Transmission of Bloodborne Viruses from Infected Healthcare Workers in Healthcare Settings' from Public Health Agency of Canada, Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/nosocomial-occupational-infections/prevention-transmission-bloodborne-viruses-healthcare-workers.html>

may, depending on the circumstances, face sanctions under the provisions of the Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour for All Health Professional Students<sup>3</sup>.

4. Students are required to comply with the immunization policies of the Faculty.

### STUDENTS WHO ARE EXPOSED TO A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE IN THE COURSE OF AN EXPERIENTIAL PLACEMENT

Students who incur an injury or other medically related incident that may place them at risk of acquiring a communicable disease, during the performance of activities as a part of their experiential placement, must immediately seek medical attention. The incident must be reported by the student, at the earliest opportunity, to their preceptor and the Office of Experiential Education to ensure that required documentation is completed.

Students who are exposed to a communicable disease during the course of an experiential placement are strongly encouraged to follow up with Health and Wellness services at the University of Toronto or any other health care provider for additional counselling or follow up needs related to the communicable disease in question.

### CO-RESPONSIBILITY WITH PRACTICE SITES

The Faculty of Pharmacy and the practice sites each are responsible for ensuring that students are adequately instructed in infection control as it relates to communicable diseases. This will include the following:

1. The Faculty will provide information on body substance precautions and infection control and inform students as to their responsibilities with respect to infection control.
2. Affiliated institutional practice sites are required to comply with the Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols for Ontario Hospitals developed under the Public Hospitals Act/Regulation 965. Compliance with these Protocols requires the hospitals to provide instruction in infection control precautions.

## IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Notice of the specific immunization requirements, including deadlines for submission of documentation, is provided to pharmacy students prior to starting experiential placements.

Documentary proof of current **required** immunization against specific diseases must be submitted by the specified date. In addition, chest X-ray and titre results and documentation of history of specific infections, where relevant, are also required.

### STUDENTS WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH IMMUNIZATION AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO PROCEED TO EXPERIENTIAL PLACEMENTS.

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#### REQUIREMENTS:

##### TUBERCULOSIS:

Students whose tuberculin status is unknown, and those previously identified as tuberculin negative (with only ONE single-step Mantoux), require a baseline two-step Mantoux skin test with PPD/5TU. However, if the student has a documented negative PPD test during the preceding 12 months a single-step test may be given.

For students who have had  $\geq 2$  previously documented negative single step PPD tests or 1 previously documented 2-step PPD test, a single-step test may be given.

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<sup>3</sup>University of Toronto's 'Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour For All Health Professional Students' [March 31, 2015]  
<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/professional-practice-behaviour-all-health-professional-students-standards-0>

Annual TB testing is a requirement for individuals who have previously tested negative.

Students who have had previous Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine may still be at risk of infection and should be assessed. **A history of BCG vaccine is not a contraindication to tuberculin testing.**

#### DOCUMENTED POSITIVE TUBERCULIN SKIN TEST

If a student has a previously documented positive tuberculin skin test, the student does not need to receive another tuberculin skin test, but requires additional documentation. Chest x-ray's are required every 24 months.

A chest X-ray should be taken on students who:

- i. are TB skin test positive and have never been evaluated for the positive skin test;
- ii. had a previous diagnosis of tuberculosis but have never received adequate treatment for TB; and/or
- iii. have pulmonary symptoms that may be due to TB.
- iv. Last CXR was done over 24 months ago.

#### MEASLES, MUMPS, RUBELLA, VARICELLA:

Proof of 2 vaccinations with documented date for Measles, Mumps and Varicella, and proof of 1 vaccination with documented date for Rubella, OR positive titre results for antibodies is required.

#### DIPHTHERIA/TETANUS/ACELLULAR PERTUSSIS:

Documented history of a primary series and dates of boosters are required. In the absence of documentation of an original series, the learner should be offered immunization with a full primary series. Immunization against diphtheria/tetanus is effective for approximately ten years. If the most recent booster is not within the last 10 years, a booster must be given.

A single dose of Acellular Pertussis in the form of a Tdap (Adacel<sup>®</sup> vaccine) is given if not previously received as an adult (18+). The adult dose is in addition to the routine adolescent booster dose (age 14-16). There is no contraindication in receiving Tdap in situations where the learner has had a recent Td immunization.

#### POLIO:

Proof of a complete primary series of polio vaccinations is required. Should immunization be required prior to the commencement of experiential placements, inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine (IPV) is indicated rather than oral poliomyelitis (OPV) vaccine because people receiving OPV may shed the virus and inadvertently expose immunocompromised patients to live virus. Persons who have not received a full primary course should have the series completed with IPV regardless of the interval since the last dose.

#### HEPATITIS B:

Documented immunization of a complete series of Hepatitis B, including lab evidence of immunity Antibodies to HBsAg (Anti-HBsAg over 10 IU/L = immune) must be provided at least one month after the vaccine series is complete. (**Lab** evidence is sufficient if documentation of primary series unavailable.)

- v. **Individuals who are non-immune** (i.e. do not have the antibodies against HBsAg after immunization), must be screened for the surface antigen (HBsAg). If the HBsAg result is positive, a further screen for e- antigen (HBeAg) must be performed.
- vi. **Individuals who are non-immune and HBsAg negative** must have a booster dose of HB immunization, and subsequent lab results recorded completed 30 days after the booster dose. If lab evidence (anti-HBs) does not demonstrate immunity after the booster dose, the complete series (doses 2 & 3) should be completed with labs done 30 days after the third dose. If non-immune ('non-responder'), individual consideration should be given to the case, depending on the professional requirements.

Routine booster doses of vaccine are not currently recommended in persons with previously demonstrated antibody as immune memory persists even in the absence of detectable anti-HBs, however periodic testing should be conducted in hepatitis B responders who are immunosuppressed to ensure they are maintaining their anti-HBs titre.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

Students must comply with institutional/corporate policy of the site to which they are assigned. Individual institutions and practice sites may have immunization, testing or documentation requirements for student placements beyond those required by the Faculty. Information regarding these requirements will be provided to students when site assignments are confirmed on CORE ELMS

## INFLUENZA VACCINATION

Influenza vaccination is strongly recommended for all pharmacy students participating in experiential placements. Students who choose not to have an annual influenza vaccination should be aware that they will not be able to participate in rotations at sites requiring the influenza vaccination.

## COVID-19 VACCINATION

Pharmacy students participating in experiential rotations are recommended to receive updated COVID-19 vaccinations as per current public health guidance. Note that sites may have specific vaccination requirements.