

Infection Control Policy

The following policy refers specifically to Westfield State University. Other policies may exist at clinical sites and will be distributed at those sites.

I. Exposure Determination

- A. Westfield State University Physician Assistant Program faculty and students in the course of their teaching or learning may be involved in exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials through skin, eye, mucus membrane or parenteral contact.

Exposure does not include incidental exposures that may take place at the school and that are neither reasonably nor routinely expected to incur in the normal school duties.

The term 'other bodily fluids' and 'other potentially infectious materials' refer to semen, vaginal secretions, cerebral spinal fluid, plural fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, and any other body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, as well as any fixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead).

- B. The following tasks involve exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials:

1. Class assignments and/or laboratory exercises in which the blood or other body fluids of human subjects are tested
2. Activities involving phlebotomy, whereby blood samples are taken and analyzed for the purposes of scientific research
3. Activities involving the administration of first aid to injured persons

II. Precautions to Prevent Transmission of HIV, HBV, and Other Blood Borne Pathogens

A. Universal Precautions

Blood and body fluid precautions should be consistently used in all instances when blood or other bodily fluids are present. "Universal blood and bodily fluid precautions" or "universal precautions", should be used whenever there is a presence of blood or other body fluids.

1. The individuals should routinely use appropriate barrier precautions to prevent skin and mucus membrane exposure when contact with blood or other body fluids of any subject is anticipated. Gloves should be worn for touching blood and body fluids, mucus membranes, or other non-intact skin of all subjects, for handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids, and for performing venipuncture and other vascular access procedures. Gloves should be changed after contact with each subject. Masks and protective eye wear or face shield should be worn during procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or fluids to prevent exposure of mucus membranes of the mouth, nose, and eyes.
2. Hands and other skin surfaces should be washed immediately and thoroughly if contaminated with blood or other body fluids. Hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed.
3. Individuals should take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices during procedures, when cleaning used instruments, during disposal of used needles, and when handling sharp instruments after procedures. To prevent needle stick injuries, needles should not be recapped, purposely bent or broken by hand. After they have been used, disposable syringes and needles, scalpel blades, and other sharp items should be placed in puncture resistant containers for disposal. The

puncture resistant containers should be located as close as practical to the use area. Large-bore needles should be placed in a puncture resistant container for transport to the reprocessing area.

4. Individuals who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis should refrain from all direct contact with equipment until the condition resolves.
5. Pregnant individuals are not known to be at greater risk of contracting HIV infection than other individuals. However, if a pregnant individual develops HIV infection, the fetus is at risk for infection. Because of this risk, pregnant individuals should be especially familiar with and strictly adhere to precaution to minimize the risk of HIV transmission.

B. Precautions for Laboratories

Blood and other body fluids from all subjects should be considered infective. To supplement the universal blood and body fluids precautions listed above, the following precautions are recommended for individuals in clinical laboratories.

1. All specimens of blood and body fluids should be put in a well-constructed container with a secure lid to prevent leaking during transport. Care should be taken when collecting each specimen to avoid contaminating the outside of the container.
2. All persons processing blood and body fluid specimens (e.g. removing tops from vacuum tubes) should wear gloves, masks and protective eye wear. Gloves should be changed and hands washed after completion of the process.
3. Mechanical pipetting should be used for manipulating all fluids. Mouth pipetting must not be done.
4. Laboratory work surfaces should be decontaminated with an appropriate chemical germicide after a spill of blood or other body fluids, and when work activities are completed.
5. Contaminated materials used in laboratory tests should be decontaminated before processing or be placed in bags and disposed of in accordance with institutional policies for disposal of infective waste.
6. Scientific equipment that has been contaminated with blood or body fluids should be decontaminated and cleaned before being repaired in the laboratory or transported to the manufacturer.
7. All persons should wash their hands after completing laboratory activities and should remove protective clothing before leaving the laboratory.

Implementation of universal blood and body fluids precautions for all subjects eliminates the need for warning labels on specimens since blood and body fluids from all individuals should be considered infective.

III. Post Exposure Follow-up

- A. Should any individual exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials by means of a specific eye, mouth or other mucus membrane, non-intact skin or parenteral contact, they must report the incident to the PA Program and complete the incident report form. A copy of the report shall be immediately furnished to the appropriate administrative.
- B. Following the exposure of a student to a blood born pathogen the student should contact the PA Program immediately. If a student is at a healthcare facility or hospital that can provide the appropriate exposure protocols they should immediately be evaluated on site. If students are at a facility which cannot accommodate the appropriate evaluation, students may be evaluated at Work Wise Occupational Medicine at Mercy Medical Center. If the exposure occurs in the evening, weekend or holiday students should be evaluated at the Baystate Medical Center Emergency Department. All costs associated with any incident or exposure is the responsibility of student.