

Student Information, including ACT Health employees on Clinical Placement *Requirements for Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination*

The transmission of infectious diseases in health facilities has the potential to cause serious illness and avoidable deaths for staff, patients and other persons in the community. ACT Health is committed to minimising the risk of transmission of the specified infectious diseases and blood borne viruses listed in **Table A**. Refer to the *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination* procedure for more information. In this procedure students have the same vaccination and screening requirements as staff.

Table A

The Specified Infectious Diseases

| Specified Infectious Diseases | Blood Borne Viruses (Dental, Medical and Midwifery Students) |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Diphtheria | Hepatitis B (infection) |
| Pertussis (Whooping cough) | Hepatitis C |
| Tetanus | Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) |
| Measles | |
| Mumps | |
| Rubella (German Measles) | |
| Varicella (Chicken Pox) | |
| Tuberculosis (TB) | |
| Influenza (Flu) | |
| Hepatitis B (immunity) | |

Canberra Hospital and Health Services has developed the following documents to help you understand and comply with the *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination* procedure:

- Information Sheet 1** Risk Categorisation – risk of occupational exposure to the Specified Infectious Diseases.
Information Sheet 2 Checklist of required evidence of protection.
Information Sheet 3 Risks, consequences of exposure and protective measures.

- Form 1** Participation in Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination – staff new to ACT Health and existing staff applying for new positions.
Form 3 Tuberculosis (TB) Assessment Tool.
Form 4 Vaccine non-responders and staff with a medical contraindication to a vaccine.

Some of the assessment, screening and vaccination requirements take several months to complete. For this reason, it is recommended that you undertake all requirements as soon as possible.

Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs) are invasive procedures where there is potential for direct contact between the skin (usually finger or thumb) and sharp surgical instruments, needles or sharp tissues, spicules of bone or teeth in body cavities or in poorly visualised or confined body sites, including the mouth of the patient. Refer to the *Australian National Guidelines for the Management of Health Care Workers Known to be Infected with Blood Borne Viruses* for more information.

Staff who perform EPPs must consent to provide information about their Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV status including:

- For Hepatitis B:** HBs Antigen
For Hepatitis C: HCV Antibody.
For HIV: HIV Antibody/Antigen

Dental, medical and midwifery students may be required to perform or assist with EPPs during their clinical placement and must consent to provide information about their Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV status.

Other students (e.g. allied health) are not required to provide information about their HBV, HCV and HIV status except if this is required for a particular clinical placement known to involve EPPs.

Student Responsibilities

Make an appointment to see your General Practitioner. Take the following information to the appointment: your Vaccination Record Card (if you have one) or other evidence of vaccination and immunity; Information Sheet 2; and Form 1, 3 and 4 (if applicable). Your GP will assess if you meet all the screening and vaccination requirements. Some students, as outlined on Form 3, may need a tuberculosis clinical review by an Australian accredited Chest Clinic, such as the Department of Respiratory and Sleep Medicine at the Canberra Hospital (ph 02) 5124 9977).

Submit the completed and signed Forms 1 and 3 (and 4 if applicable) to your clinical placement officer at your educational institution as soon as possible. **If you are under 18 years of age, your parent (or guardian) must also sign your forms.** Your educational institution will notify ACT Health of your screening and vaccination status, and if required forward copies of Forms 1 and 3 (and 4 if applicable).

You may not be permitted to attend a clinical placement in an ACT Health facility if you do not consent to participate in the occupational assessment, screening and vaccination process or you do not meet all the requirements of the *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination* procedure.

If you are a vaccine non-responder or have a medical contraindication to a vaccination your educational institution is responsible for advising you about the risks, preventative measures and appropriate procedures if you are exposed to an infectious disease you are not vaccinated for on clinical placement. You may also like to speak with your General Practitioner. The expert risk assessment committee will assess if you can attend clinical placement. When on clinical placement you will be managed as an unprotected staff member. Unprotected staff members may have restrictions in the areas they work or the groups of patients they work with.

Incomplete Hepatitis B vaccination

A full adult course of Hepatitis B vaccine consists of three doses, with a minimum of 1 month between the first and second doses and minimum of 2 months between the second and third dose and a minimum of 4 months between the first and third dose (i.e. 0, 1 and 4 month or 0, 2 and 4 month schedule). Post-vaccination serological testing is required 4-8 weeks after completing the vaccination course. This means that the minimum time to complete a course of HBV vaccine and serological testing is five months.

ACT Health recognises that you may not be able to complete the Hepatitis B vaccination requirements prior to the scheduling of your first clinical placement. If you are a first year student in your first semester of study and have commenced but not yet completed a course of Hepatitis B vaccine you may attend a clinical placement if you have:

- Completed all other vaccination requirements and consent to being managed as an unprotected staff member AND
- Provided documented evidence that you have received at least the first dose of Hepatitis B vaccine AND
- You agree to complete the Hepatitis B vaccine course within the minimum possible timeframe and provide a post-vaccination serology result within 6 weeks of having completed your Hepatitis B vaccine course.

Failure to complete the Hepatitis B vaccine course and provide a post-vaccination serology result will result in suspension from attending further clinical placements in all ACT Health facilities. ACT Health recognises this may jeopardise your course of study.

Your educational institution is responsible for advising you about the risks, preventative measures and appropriate procedures if you are exposed to blood or body fluids on clinical placement prior to having received a full course of Hepatitis B vaccine. You may also like to speak with your General Practitioner.