

# Protect yourself!

## Occupational Health Student Information

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Anyone working or training in a health care setting with proximity to clients is advised to undergo certain tests / vaccinations, if you have no proof of your immunity. This is to ensure that both you and the client groups you may come into contact with are protected as far as possible from certain infections that could be contracted in the workplace.

The Department of Health (DOH) recommends the following vaccinations, which Occupational Health (OH) will organise for you. You will not be charged by the University for these tests / vaccinations whereby they are undertaken by the University's Occupational Health Department (OHD). Should you arrange for your GP to undertake the vaccinations / tests, please provide copies of the test results and dates of the vaccinations to the OHD, this enables OH to provide a fitness certificate with your clearance. If you do not attend and do not contact us, OH are required to advise the academic staff that you have not complied with this requirement, which may result in the removal from placement / course. You are not required to show or discuss the results of these tests or vaccinations to anyone other than the University's OHD or future employers. It is vital that prior to commencing your course you get a printed copy of the relevant vaccinations and tests you have had; you will be able to get this from your GP and/or OHD if you already work in a hospital setting.

Make sure your name and date of birth are on your printed copy and send it to: Occupational Health Department  
Schwann Building, Level 10  
University of Huddersfield  
Queensgate  
Huddersfield  
HD1 3DH



### Varicella Zoster (Chicken Pox)

If you have no history of Chicken Pox or Shingles a blood test will determine whether two vaccinations are necessary.

### Measles, Mumps and Rubella

You need to have two documented doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination to be considered immune to Measles, Mumps and Rubella. If not, the Department of Health guidance is that you undertake two doses of the MMR vaccine. Please note that there has been a recent upsurge in cases of Measles and Mumps in the UK hence the advice that you are vaccinated.

### Tuberculosis (BCG)

We need to ensure you are provided with some protection against TB whilst on your clinical placement. Vaccination does not necessarily make you immune but provides you with some protection; OH cannot say how much and for how long, but it is thought to be around fifteen years to a lifetime in some cases.

OH will be looking for evidence of a BCG scar (likely to be on your left upper arm) or evidence from your GP that you have had the BCG vaccination. All students will be required to complete a TB symptom checker form at clinic, if you are unable to provide evidence of the above. This form will help OH to identify which students may require a blood test for TB infection.

Please note: There is currently a UK shortage of Mantoux and BCG vaccine. The Department of Health has confirmed that students will be able to commence clinical placement without vaccination.

OH will recall you when the supply situation changes. Some students will require a blood test (such as those that have moved to the UK from a high-risk TB area in the past 5 years); however, OH will advise those students when assessing the TB symptom checker form.

## HIV

Should you be a carrier of the HIV virus this does not preclude clinical activity and at present it is not required as a test prior to any clinical work. However, there is an ethical and legal requirement that you declare this to the OHD in confidence and discuss the implications for both yourself and client groups that you could come into contact with. Those who believe they have been exposed to infection with HIV or other blood borne viruses, in whatever circumstances, must seek medical advice and diagnostic antibody testing if appropriate.

Please note: Should HIV prophylaxis be required it is recommended that it is commenced wherever possible within the hour.

Following any assessment you are also requested to advise the University OHD, as OH will need to arrange follow up advice and further tests/ investigations if indicated and required by yourself.

## Hepatitis B

This vaccination is recommended for all health care workers in order to protect them from the Hepatitis B virus. This is a virus passed in the blood and body fluids of infected persons and can be transmitted by a variety of routes including sharps injuries and splashes to the eyes or mouth.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that Hepatitis B is highly endemic in certain parts of the world therefore the University OHD risk assessment recommends that new students from these areas would benefit from testing for any evidence of the virus prior to commencing on a course of the vaccinations.

Normally a course of three vaccinations followed by a blood test is sufficient to confer immunity, some people require a further dose and blood test and a few need a full repeat course.

If you remain non immune after four doses of the vaccine OH will seek your consent to test for possible prior exposure to Hepatitis B virus – this is achieved by undertaking the following tests:

- Hepatitis B antibodies – standard test for Hepatitis B immunity
- Hepatitis B core antibody – test for previous infection and immunity to Hepatitis B (Core antibody is not present when immunity is achieved through vaccination)
- Hepatitis B surface antigen – test that can indicate current infection

Presence of these in your blood does not mean that you cannot work in clinical areas except in particular circumstances (see Exposure Prone Procedure (EPP) info to the right) where this would have to be reviewed.



## Body fluid contamination and Sharps injuries

This type of injury can occur in clinical settings as a result of an accident or failure to follow guidelines for disposal of sharp instruments.

Any situation where blood or body fluids (vomit, urine, faeces, sputum) comes into contact with the tissues of your eyes, mouth, open wounds or sore skin, e.g. eczema could result in the transmission of various illnesses to the recipient including Hepatitis B (vaccinations are available) Hepatitis C (no vaccination currently available) and HIV (no vaccination currently available, although prophylaxis is available and should commence ASAP). An injury from a used needle or sharp instrument could also result in the transmission of various illnesses.

Should you have this type of injury in the course of your clinical placements it is important that you report to the OHD at your placement or Accident and Emergency if the incident is out of hours ASAP.

## Information

Once all of your tests and vaccinations are completed OH will provide you with copies of them which you should keep in order to provide to future employers.

For further information about the vaccinations and tests covered here please go to:

Vaccinations: Green Book Hepatitis B Chapter at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Hepatitis B: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) search Hepatitis B

Exposure Prone Procedures (EPP): [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

- HSC 2002/010 Hepatitis C & EPP infected Health Care Workers
- HSC 2000/020 Hepatitis B infected Health Care Workers
- Health Clearance for Serious Communicable Diseases (draft guidance) 2003