

Protect yourself!

Occupational Health student information

Requirements for all new Midwifery and Operating Department Practice (ODP) students.

All health care students who will be working in Exposure Prone Procedures (EPP) are required by the Department of Health Guidelines to undergo certain tests and vaccinations before they are allowed to practice in these areas.

What are EPP's?

Invasive procedures where there is a risk that injury to the worker may result in the exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the worker (Department of Health 2007). This happens through body fluid contamination and sharps injuries.

For example:

- blood or body fluids such as vomit, urine, faeces and sputum come into contact with your eyes, mouth, open wounds or broken skin
- sharps injuries stabbing your skin with a sharp instrument e.g. contaminated needle, suture blade

Why do you need testing?

- Department of Health guidelines revised in 2007 require all health care students and health care practitioners to be clear of and protected against certain infections
- to protect health care workers and patients from infections

So what do I need to be vaccinated and tested for?

Chicken Pox (Varicella Zoster)
Rubella (German Measles) and Measles
Tuberculosis (BCG)

An initial test to exclude the following infections is mandatory for EPP workers:

Hepatitis B
Hepatitis C
HIV



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)

OH 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.

Hepatitis C

There is no vaccination available for this blood-borne virus. Under existing Department of Health Guidelines (March 2007), new healthcare workers who will perform EPPs should be tested for Hepatitis C.



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 sharp 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 Occupational Health Department 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 we 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 EPP info to the right) where this would have to be reviewed.

HIV

Under the Department of Health Guidelines (March 2007), new healthcare workers who will perform EPPs should be tested for HIV.

Under Department of Health guidelines failure to complete all of the listed health checks will mean that the Midwifery or ODP student will be ineligible for clinical placement.

It is vital that prior to commencing your course you get a printed copy of relevant vaccinations and tests you have had; you will be able to get this from your GP and/or Occupational Health Department 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

For further information on the new guidelines for new healthcare workers please refer to:

“Health Clearance for Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV: New healthcare workers”. Published March 2007. Available at www.dh.gov.uk/publications

Exposure Prone Procedures (EPP): 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

If you require further information or have any concerns regarding the information in this leaflet please contact the Occupational Health Department.

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