



Needlestick Injuries and Other Blood-borne and/or Body Fluid Pathogen Control Policy

Purpose

The Pritzker School of Medicine and The University of Chicago Office of Environmental Health and Safety dictate that all medical students shall practice universal precautions to eliminate or minimize exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM).

Overview

Universal precautions shall be observed in all situations where there is potential for contact with blood or OPIM. Pritzker School of Medicine students will be informed about risks, prevention, and treatment of exposures.

Related LCME Standards:

- 12.8 Student Exposure Policies/Procedures

Principles

1. Pritzker School of Medicine educates medical students about the proper methods of exposure prevention, procedures in place for care and treatment if exposure occurs, and the financial liability Pritzker School of Medicine covers for students exposed to blood or OPIM.

Policy

1. Pritzker School of Medicine students are familiarized with infection control procedures and work-related exposures while in their first year of medical school training. Additionally, medical students will be immediately informed of any of changes to policies and procedures by the University of Chicago Office of Environmental Health and Safety throughout their medical school training period.
2. Students, including visiting students, are instructed to first clean and decontaminate by washing wounds and contaminated skin with soap and water; rinse mouth, nose and eyes with water or saline.

3. Page the Needlestick hotline 188-9990 immediately for assessment and advice regarding treatment. Pager 9990 is staffed by a University of Chicago Occupational Medicine (UCOM) clinician and is available 24 hours a day.
4. Students are instructed to do the following per the University of Chicago policy (link below):
 - a. Do not talk with the source patient about testing for HIV and hepatitis viruses; do not draw the source patients' blood; do not go to the Emergency Room.
 - b. Inform your supervisor; follow instructions of UCOM Clinician. For exposures that occur during UCOM hours, provide UCOM on-call clinician with source patient information, then come directly to UCOM for treatment. For exposures that occur after UCOM hours, provide the UCOM on-call clinician with source patient information. If needed, a starter dose of prophylactic medicine will be delivered to you.
5. Students will not be excluded or discriminated against in any way due to infection of a potentially transmissible disease. Only a qualified, medically-based judgement can establish exclusion or restriction if the welfare of patients, other members of the patient-care community, or welfare of the individual is deemed to be at risk.
6. Students who are infected with any potentially transmissible disease will not be excluded from participating in patient-care activities, or restricted in their access to patient-care services or facilities because of their health status, unless medically-based judgements in individual cases establish that exclusion or restriction is appropriate for the welfare of patients, the welfare of other members of the patient-care community, or the welfare of the individual.
7. Insurance pre-authorization is not needed to seek exposure treatment and follow-up services, but SHCS should be notified as soon as possible as charges will incur for care. If there are expenses related to treatment of a Needlestick injury for registered students, whether the injury occurred on or off-site, Pritzker School of Medicine will cover the expenses of related care. If there are expenses related to treatment of a Needlestick injury for visiting students, the visiting student's health insurance will be billed and the visiting student should work directly with their responsible home school's Dean of Students' Office.

Procedures

1. Needlestick Injuries and OPIM policy is posted on the policy page of the Pritzker School of Medicine website. Additional resources can be found on the University Policies page on the University of Chicago website.
2. Information about Needlestick Injuries and Other Blood-borne and/or Body Fluid Pathogen Control Policy is distributed to students during week 1 of medical school, the autumn second year class meeting, and during orientation to the clerkship year.

3. Students will be informed of, and expected to adhere to, standardized protocols at offsite locations. If the student is unfamiliar with the protocol of the specific site, they should report to the nearest emergency room or the on-site emergency room, if one is available. Students may also contact the UC Needlestick Hotline for assistance and advice, as well as the Dean on Call.

Accountable Dean(s) or Director(s): Dean of Students

Related Policies: [University of Chicago Policy on Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct](#), [University of Chicago Environmental Health and Safety Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Program](#), [University of Chicago Campus and Student Life Resources](#)

Approval Date: December 1, 2021

Reviewed August 2026

Approval Body: PSOM Curriculum & Education Policy Committee