

UC Blue Ash College Dental Hygiene Department Bloodborne Pathogens/Infectious Disease(s) Policy

The UC Blue Ash Dental Hygiene Department recognizes that bloodborne pathogens such as human immunodeficiency (HIV), Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) present a risk to students, faculty, staff and patients.

Preventing the transmission of bloodborne pathogens from patients to healthcare workers and from healthcare workers to patients requires a comprehensive approach that includes administering Hepatitis B vaccine to all susceptible healthcare workers at risk, viewing all blood as potentially infectious, using measures to reduce blood exposures, and having a staff committed to safe work practices. Critical elements to this approach include adherence to universal precautions, appropriate sterilizing, cleaning and disinfection procedures, safe injection practices, and reducing the risks for injuries.

The department's infection control procedures including disinfection and sterilization procedures are outlined in the *Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual*.

Methods for reducing risk exposure to bloodborne pathogens and post-exposure management are outlined in the Bloodborne Pathogens Training which is taken by the faculty, staff and students on an annual basis.

The purpose of the department's procedures and training is to minimize the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Policies will be reviewed annually and changes recommended as appropriate. This policy is provided to faculty, staff, and students upon entry to the program and is available to others upon request.

Standard Precautions

Standard precautions, as defined by CDC, are a set of precautions designed to prevent transmission of organisms spread by:

- Blood
- All body fluids, secretions, and excretions except sweat, regardless of whether they contain blood
- Non-intact skin
- Mucous membranes

Standard precautions are similar to universal precautions and are designed to reduce the risk of infection transmission from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection to patients and clinicians. Standard precautions apply to contact with blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions except sweat, regardless of whether they contain blood, non-intact skin and mucous membranes.

Standard precautions involve the use of protective barriers such as gloves, gowns, aprons, masks, or protective eyewear, which can reduce the risk of exposure of the healthcare worker's skin or mucous membranes to potentially infective materials. In addition, healthcare workers must take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices.

Provision of Dental Hygiene Services

Because adherence to current and accepted infection control procedures provides adequate protection for patients and healthcare providers from bloodborne infectious diseases, students and faculty are expected to provide dental hygiene services to and work with persons who have a bloodborne infectious disease. Faculty or students refusing to work with any patient will be counseled as to current medical information. A continued refusal to provide dental hygiene services to, or work with persons who have a bloodborne infectious disease, could cause an employee or student to be dismissed from the program.

Bloodborne Pathogen and Infection Control Training

Training in infection control procedures begins immediately in the pre-clinical course, fall term of the freshman year of the Dental Hygiene program. Current CDC guidelines for infection control serve as the foundation for the infection control training program. Infection control procedures are outlined in the *Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual* and are reviewed annually.

Immunizations

The UC Blue Ash Dental Hygiene program requires students, at their own cost, upon admission, to receive a baseline tuberculosis skin test; to complete the Hepatitis vaccine series, followed by a quantitative titer to test for Hepatitis B antibodies.

Copies of all immunization and titer records are to be submitted to the Dental Hygiene Program Coordinator in a timely manner. Failure to do so will require consultation with the Department Academic Unit Head.

Medical Conditions

Students, faculty and staff with HIV/AIDS, HBV and/or HCV will be allowed unrestricted classroom/clinic attendance, employment opportunities and participation in curricular and extracurricular activities as long as they are physically and mentally able and meet admission requirements.

Dental hygiene students do not perform invasive exposure-prone procedures such as maxillofacial surgery. Procedures performed by dental hygiene students are considered low-risk or no-risk for provider-to-patient blood exposure.

Chronic HIV/AIDS, HBV and/or HCV infection should not preclude the student from practicing dental hygiene. Students with chronic infection will be managed as any other student with a personal health issue.

It is the responsibility of the faculty to protect patients and students. Therefore, faculty members may exclude students from the clinical area due to illness, injuries, lack of preparation for practice, inappropriate attire, or any situation deemed unsafe.

Clinic Restrictions

Any student or applicant to the program who has an acute or chronic medical condition making them susceptible to opportunistic infection should discuss with their personal physician or other qualified health professional whether their condition might affect their ability to safely perform dental hygiene

services. The Dental Hygiene Department may require a physician's release for a student to begin or resume clinical activities.

Clinic Dismissal

Any student or healthcare personnel who engage in unsafe and/or careless clinical practice which creates risks to the health of patients, employees, or students shall be subject to disciplinary action. When such actions are brought to the attention of the Department Academic Unit Head, the student or healthcare personnel may be suspended immediately from all patient activities pending a full investigation of the matter.

PATIENTS

Dental Hygiene Services

Patients infected with bloodborne pathogens can be safely treated in the Dental Hygiene Clinic. Current epidemiological evidence indicates that there is no significant risk of contracting bloodborne diseases through the provision of dental treatment when standard precautions are routinely followed. Therefore all patients, regardless of HIV, HBV, or HCV status will be provided dental hygiene services in the UC Blue Ash Dental Hygiene Clinic. Standard precautions for **all** patients will be followed.

Confidentiality

All information regarding the health status of an individual is confidential and is considered protected health information. It is to be used only for treatment, payment and healthcare operations. A privacy notice explaining the use of health information is provided to patients at the initial appointment.

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