

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE DENTAL PROGRAMS

INFECTION CONTROL & BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

In dentistry there is potential for exposure to bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases by way of saliva and blood. The dental programs at Hagerstown Community College implements the standards set forth in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR 19109.1030) and the 2016 CDC Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings with recommendations from the CDC 2003 Guidelines on Infection Control. In addition, the dental programs provides the students, faculty, and staff with personal protective equipment for safety when working with classmates and patients in various dental procedures. Students must show proof of immunization for Hepatitis B and Tetanus. Should the student decline, for any reason, to comply with immunization, he/she will discuss their concerns with their respective program coordinator and be required to sign a declination form.

IMMUNIZATIONS

A comprehensive medical history, physical examination, negative Tuberculin test and immunizations are requirements for students in dental programs. Hepatitis B vaccinations are required for all students, faculty, and staff at their expense that may be exposed to blood or other infectious materials. Proper written documentation of the series of shots and the dates will be kept in the individual student's file. If the vaccination has been previously received, individuals should have their antibody titers checked via a blood test and the written results also kept on record for the individual. All information regarding the health status of an individual is confidential and protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1994 and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Environmental hazards of dental practice include: disorders associated with repetitive activities, exposure to high decibel sounds, exposure to hazardous chemicals or substances, accidental injury, exposure to radiation and allergic reactions to latex and other chemical agents.

OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO BLOOD AND AIRBORNE PATHOGENS

“An occupational exposure” is defined as contact through direct contact with blood, body fluids, nasal or saliva secretions, and or contaminated products by a health care worker. If and when an exposure occurs, definitive protocol exists. By strict adherence to the many infection control practices and policies set forth in the dental programs, the incidence of the harmful effects of occupational exposures will be minimized. The prevention of disease transmission is the goal of our practices with emphasis on the use of protective barriers and appropriate methods of sterilizing or disinfecting instruments and environmental surfaces. As such, all students, faculty, and staff must adhere to the infection control strategies that have been established and set forth in the dental programs.

Should a student, faculty member or any staff experience an occupational exposure, wound/needle stick/or puncture, they must notify the respective program coordinator to complete and file an Incident Report and follow guidelines established by Hagerstown Community College.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Various dental materials, as found in dental practices, are used in the dental programs. All standard precautions are used in the programs to protect the students, faculty, staff, and patients from potential harm and/or injury.

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS & INFECTION CONTROL TRAINING

The dental programs at Hagerstown Community College are committed to addressing issues relating to bloodborne pathogens, such as Human Immunodeficiency (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), mycobacterium tuberculosis, staphylococci, streptococci, and other bacteria and viruses to protect students, faculty, staff, and patients, as well as protect the rights of individuals who may have a bloodborne infectious disease. The dental programs complies with all local, state, and federal infection control practices and policies including the application of Standard Precautions as specified by current CDC guidelines. Students in the dental programs receive theory and practice regarding infection control procedures and prevention of exposure to bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases. Written policies and instruction on infection control to minimize the risk of disease transmission is provided in courses throughout the curriculum, at yearly required bloodborne pathogen training sessions and through documents such as the Student Handbook. Compliance of safety practices is evaluated throughout the students' educational experience to ensure a safe educational and work environment.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS

Standard precautions involve the use of protective barriers such as gloves, disposable gowns, lab jackets, masks, and protective eyewear, which can reduce the risk of exposure to the dental healthcare providers' skin or mucous membranes of potentially infectious materials. Personal protective equipment for students and faculty is removed before leaving the clinic and disposed of properly. In addition, it is recommended that all students and faculty take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices.

Handwashing

All students and faculty must wash, rinse, and dry their hands before and after treating each patient/student partner, that is, before glove placement and after glove removal. Hand washing should be performed if the one's hands come into contact with objects likely contaminated by blood, saliva or respiratory secretions. Handwashing with antimicrobial hand soap using cool to lukewarm water is adequate to remove transient organisms that may be incurred during many routine dental procedures.

Gloves

For protection of personnel and patients in dental care settings, medical gloves (non-latex or vinyl) must be worn at all times when there is potential for contacting blood, saliva, or mucous membranes. Gloves should also be worn in the dental setting if the student has a cut or tear in their skin and there is anticipated contact with another's intact skin surface. Non-sterile vinyl or non-latex gloves are appropriate for examinations and nonsurgical procedures. Gloves should cover the cuffs of long sleeves of protective clothing.

Mask/Face Shield/Protective Eyewear

Disposable protective masks, face shields, and protective eyewear prevent the transmission of infectious pathogens by protecting eyes and the mucous membranes of the mouth and nose from direct exposure to splatter of blood and saliva. A mask also blocks inhalation of microorganisms from a patient's respiratory tract, as well as aerosols produced during clinical/laboratory procedures. Masks and protective eyewear must be worn for all procedures which produce splashing and splattering of body fluids or chemicals and/or in which aerosols are produced.

Lab Jackets/Disposable Gowns

Appropriate protective clothing, such as, but not limited to, gowns, aprons, lab coats, clinic jackets, or similar outer garments, shall be worn in occupational exposure situations. The type and characteristics will depend upon the task and degree of exposure anticipated.