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		Approval Date:	04/18/2024
		Effective Date:	11/10/2020
		Review Date:	2027

POLICY TITLE: BLOOD, BODY FLUID, AND HAZARDOUS EXPOSURE POLICY AND PROTOCOL

It is the policy of the University of Houston that any student engaging in a university sponsored program receive prompt medical attention, counseling, advisement and follow-up testing, if indicated, upon sustaining a skin injury from needle stick/sharps or mucous membrane splash from potentially contaminated person's blood or bodily fluids.

Exposure to another person's blood or body fluids by needle stick, splash or other exposure may place the student at risk for exposure to Human Immune Deficiency (HIV), Hepatitis B virus (HBV), Hepatitis C virus (HCV) or other infectious agents. Students are expected to follow the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for Standard Precautions](#) to reduce the risk of exposure.

Step 1 – Immediate Treatment Protocol

Percutaneous and Non-Intact Skin Injuries

Injuries from needles or other sharp objects where the integrity of the skin has been broken or where there is the suggestion that the integrity of the skin has been broken by a potentially contaminated item:

1. Wash the skin exposure site well with sudsy soap and running water. Soap directly reduces the virus's ability to infect.
 - a. If water is not available, use alcohol.
 - b. Avoid using damaging substances such as bleach.
2. Remove any foreign materials embedded in the wound, if possible.
3. Do not bleed tissue. (There is no evidence that squeezing the wound reduces the risk of viral transmission.)
4. Rinse well.
5. Removed soiled clothing and place in a sealed plastic bag.
6. Proceed to Step 2 below.

Mucous Membrane Exposures

Exposures of eyes, nose or mouth to blood, bodily fluids or other potentially contaminated items:

1. Treat a splash to the eye or mouth immediately with a water/bath rinse to the area with tap water, sterile saline or sterile water.
2. Proceed to Step 2 below.

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Intact Skin Exposure

Where there is no suggestion that the integrity of the skin has been compromised by contaminated fluids or parasite infestation:

1. Thoroughly clean and wash exposed intact skin.
2. Remove any soiled clothing and place in a sealed plastic bag.
3. Cover hair with a bouffant cap.
4. Proceed to Step 2 below.

Step 2 – Exposure Reporting Protocol

1. Notify the supervisory faculty member immediately. The faculty member will advise you.
2. Faculty must notify the Supervisor of the host facility immediately.
3. The student must follow host facility exposure protocol and obtain urgent medical care.
 - a. The facility provides the patient's results of HIV (and AIDS viral load), Hepatitis panel, or any other communicable diseases within 24 hours.
4. Depending on the nature of the exposure, it may be necessary to begin post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) within hours of the exposure. For this reason, it is recommended that students seek medical advice immediately (facility employee health nurse, facility ER, free standing ER, or UH Student Health Center) after informing the faculty member and the clinical supervisor of the host facility.
5. Within 24 hours of the incident, not later than the next business day, contact [UH Environmental Health & Life Safety](#) at (713) 743-5858 to report incident, and complete the [UH Student/Visitor Accident Report Form](#). Submit one (1) copy to UH Environmental Health & Life Safety, one (1) copy to faculty, and one (1) copy for your permanent student records.

Student Financial Responsibility

Students are encouraged to follow-up with their healthcare provider after any exposure occurs. Neither the host (clinical) agency nor the University is responsible for the cost of the care that is involved in the treatment, management or surveillance of exposure to blood or body fluids. UH students are financially responsible for all medical visits, lab tests and prescriptions ordered for treatment of exposure.

Approved by Gessner College of Nursing Faculty Council: 03/01/2024

Approved by Dean Kathryn Tart: 04/18/2024