

<b>NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY</b>	<b>Policy No: 3349-AC-203</b>
<b>ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: Exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: September 12, 2018</b> <b>REVISION: June 20, 2023</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Office of Academic Affairs and Student Services</b>	<b>Approval Authority: Provost</b>

**(A) PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to delineate the management of incidents of exposure to blood-borne pathogens that occur to students while they are in the educational setting.

**(B) SCOPE**

This Policy applies to all students enrolled in the Colleges of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Graduate Studies at Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED).

**(C) DEFINITIONS**

- (1) “Blood-Borne Pathogens” are pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood, blood products or other potentially infectious material that may cause disease in humans.
- (2) “Educational Setting” is any setting at which an enrolled NEOMED student is engaging in curricular-related activity associated with a credit-bearing course.
- (3) “Exposure Incident” is the exposure to blood-borne pathogens through a percutaneous injury (e.g., through the skin via a needlestick or cut from a sharp object), contact with mucous membranes or contact with skin (especially when the skin is chapped, abraded, afflicted with dermatitis, or when the contact is prolonged or involving an extensive area) with blood, tissues or other bodily fluids to which universal precautions apply that occurs in the Educational Setting.
- (4) “Hepatitis B Virus” (HBV) is the most common form of hepatitis; a liver disease that initially causes inflammation of the liver and frequently leads to more serious conditions, including cirrhosis and liver cancer. HBV is usually transmitted through mucous membranes or breaks in the skin.
- (5) “HIV” is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus that attacks the immune system and may cause acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The virus is transmitted

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through sexual contact and exposure to infected bodily fluids and perinatally from mother to baby.

**(D) POLICY STATEMENT**

(1) Prevention

All students will receive training that will include information about Blood-Borne Pathogens, universal precautions, and the students’ responsibilities listed in Section (5)(c) of this Policy. This information will be appropriate to students’ level of training and area of training. This training will be provided via the Office of Student Services and specific educational site personnel.

(2) Managing Exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens in the Educational Setting

(a) Effective Management

Effective management of exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens requires coordination among multiple units within the University, including clinical education sites and any other location where a student may be exposed to Blood-Borne Pathogens as part of his/her educational experience. Effective management requires training in prevention of injury and in management of injuries when they occur.

(b) First Aid Directives

All students who experience an Exposure Incident while engaged in curricular activities will be directed to immediately seek or perform basic first aid. These first aid directives will be the same as those provided to employees with occupational injuries or exposures and will be developed by each affiliated clinical education site. In accordance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, the directives, in general, are to:

- (i) Wash all cuts and needlesticks with soap and water;

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- (ii) Flush splashes to nose, mouth, or skin with water;
- (iii) Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile wash.

(3) Reporting Exposure Incidents

- (a) All students are expected to be educated about the protocol for reporting Exposure Incidents, including to whom to report such incidents and/or where to report for treatment, during their orientation at each educational facility. Generally, students should use the following procedures:
  - (i) If the Exposure Incident occurs on the NEOMED Rootstown campus, immediately notify the course director responsible for the educational experience.
  - (ii) If the Exposure Incident occurs at a clinical education site, first notify the clinical director or preceptor and then report to the Employee Health Clinic, designated medical department or facility for that institution, for treatment and/or evaluation according to the site guidelines.
  - (iii) If the Exposure Incident occurs during an educational experience or rotation site that is not affiliated with NEOMED, students should directly report to the emergency room at that institution.
  - (iv) After initial notification of an Exposure Incident to the appropriate site contact, students should contact the NEOMED Credentialing/Immunizations Staff at 330.325.6888 within twenty-four (24) hours of the exposure, regardless of the site at which the exposure occurred, to document the incident.

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- (b) Students should provide as much of the following patient information to the Credentialing/Immunizations Staff (and to the hospital medical education office or pharmacy site personnel) regarding the Exposure Incident.
- (i) WHEN: The date and time of exposure;
  - (ii) WHERE: The location of exposure (e.g., hospital, office, etc.);
  - (iii) WHAT: The source of exposure (e.g., blood, contaminated instrument, etc.);
  - (iv) HOW and HOW LONG: How the exposure occurred (e.g., skin, mucous membrane, percutaneous, etc.) and for how long the exposure occurred (e.g., seconds, minutes, hours, etc.);
  - (v) STATUS of the PATIENT: Negative, positive, or unknown status with respect to Blood-Borne Pathogens; and,
  - (vi) Whether or not the patient is at risk for Blood-Borne Pathogens because of
    - (a) Multiple blood transfusion from 1978-1985;
    - (b) IV drug use;
    - (c) Multiple sexual partners, homosexual activity;
    - (d) Knowledge of HIV positive and/or symptoms of AIDS; and,
    - (e) Significant blood or bodily fluid exposure.

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(4) Treatment

- (a) The cost of treatment and/or evaluation will be billed to students' health insurance.
- (b) If the site physician believes that prophylactic (preventive) medication is indicated, he/she will prescribe it in accordance with practices of the affiliated hospital. These prophylactic medications will generally be the same medications prescribed for employees with exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens.

The cost of these medications will be billed to students' health insurance.

- (c) In all cases of Exposure Incidents, whether or not the exposure is considered high-risk, students will be responsible for following up with a health care provider for subsequent testing, counseling, and/or continued prescription of medication (if appropriate).

(5) Responsibilities

- (a) Office of Student Services

The Office of Student Services, with assistance from the Student Health and Insurance Committee, is responsible for:

- (i) Participating in the regular review of appropriate policy for the management of exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens in the Educational Setting;
- (ii) Working with the medical education office at each clinical education site to ensure their understanding of this Policy;

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- (iii) Ensuring that students have twenty-four (24) hour/day access to advice about the nature of Exposure Incidents and the need for prophylactic medication; and,
- (iv) Informing students about this Policy and providing annual training in universal precautions.

(b) Affiliated Hospital Offices of Medical Education

Affiliated hospital offices of medical education are responsible for:

- (i) Working with the site director for clinical education or the clerkship site director as appropriate to inform faculty about this Policy; and,
- (ii) Working with the Student Health and Insurance Committee to address any student-specific issues and to regularly review this Policy.

(c) Students

Student are responsible for:

- (i) Completing the annual Blood-Borne Pathogens training required by NEOMED;
- (ii) Reading the student information sheet and following the guidelines;
- (iii) Identifying the appropriate contacts at the NEOMED Rootstown campus and at clinical education sites;
- (iv) Communicating with the Credentialing/Immunizations staff in the Office of Student Services within twenty-four (24) hours of an Exposure Incident; and,

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(v) Maintaining health insurance that includes coverage of any examinations, testing, screening, and preventive and therapeutic treatment required as a direct result of the exposure to Blood-Borne Pathogens in the Educational Setting, including those that occur as a result of an accidental needlestick.

(d) Clearance to Return to the University

(i) Medical Clearance

It shall be the responsibility of treating health care providers to evaluate students who have been exposed to an infectious disease and to provide written clearance for their return to the University at such time when they no longer pose a risk to the health of others.

(ii) Academic Clearance

It shall be the responsibility of the respective Colleges to evaluate students who have been exposed to an infectious disease and to provide clearance for their return to the University at such time when they will be able to actively participate in educational and/or clinical activities. Authorization to return to the curriculum is provided by the following:

(a) College of Graduate Studies – Vice Dean;

(b) College of Medicine – Senior Associate Dean, Academic Affairs;

(c) College of Pharmacy – Senior Associate Dean, Education.