



ROWAN-VIRTUA
School of
Osteopathic Medicine

SECTION: Student Affairs

SUBJECT: Needlestick and Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Policy and Procedure

REVISION DATE: May 23, 2023

INITIATED BY: Office of Student Affairs

APPROVED BY:

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PURPOSE: This policy and procedure is instituted to ensure appropriate action is taken to prevent, prepare, and protect SOM students from needlesticks and bloodborne pathogens exposure and to provide protocols to follow in the event of these exposures.

SCOPE: This policy and procedure applies to all actively enrolled SOM medical students.

DEFINITIONS: SOM provides training to students regarding safety measures surrounding exposure to infectious materials. Infectious materials include anything coming from someone's body other than your own (for example, blood and bodily fluids) and all lab cultures.

PROCEDURE: All SOM students receive training on infectious hazard methods of prevention and safety, including protocols surrounding access to care and treatment after exposure. The protocols included in this policy must be followed whenever there is the potential for exposure. Students are expected to comply with recommended infection prevention precautions and procedures at the point of patient care at each clinical site.

1. Each student is responsible for their own safety throughout their education at SOM.
 - a. SOM will provide students with education and information regarding appropriate policies and procedures to follow to protect themselves during their educational experience and when they are potentially exposed to blood-borne pathogens and communicable diseases. SOM students are expected to comply with all infection prevention policies and procedures.

2. Education and Training

- All students receive training surrounding infection prevention and procedures to follow in the event of an exposure.
- During first-year orientation, all students receive training and education regarding needle sticks, sharps, and body fluid procedures and the prevention of blood-borne pathogen transmission.
- Prior to their first clinical experience, students receive online and in-person instruction regarding the prevention and understanding of all infectious diseases they may encounter in a clinical setting.

f. An exposure checklist (laminated card) detailing the steps to follow in the event of an exposure is provided to all SOM students.

3. Standard Precautions

- Consider blood, body fluids and tissue from ALL PATIENTS to be potentially infectious.
- Perform hand hygiene before/after all patient contacts.
- Wear gloves when exposure to blood and body fluids may occur, e.g., during phlebotomy. Change your gloves and perform hand hygiene after each procedure and before contact with another patient.
- Wear a gown, mask and goggles when blood or body fluids splashes may occur (e.g. during surgery, placing nasogastric tubes, etc.).
- Report immediately all incidents of blood and body fluid exposure of the following types:
 - i. Parenteral: needle stick, puncture or cut.
 - ii. Mucous membrane: splash to eyes, nose, mouth.
 - iii. Cutaneous: contact with blood and body fluids on ungloved hands or other skin surfaces that may be cut, chapped, abraded, or affected by active dermatitis.

4. Immediate Response-Time Matters!

- Clean wounds or punctures with soap and water.
- Flush mucous membranes or skin copiously with water or saline.
- DO NOT “force bleed” the wound.
- DO NOT apply caustics (e.g. bleach, organic solvents, hard surface disinfectants, etc.).
- Notify the resident, attending physician, and/or the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g. HBsAG, HCV, antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV & HCV status is known.
- When HIV post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is indicated, early treatment (within hours) is recommended.
- If you are not on or near Rowan-Virtua SOM Stratford campus, go to the nearest emergency department for evaluation or call 866-HIV-CHEC for advice and locate the nearest emergency center.
- If you are on or near the Stratford campus, immediately contact the Department of Medicine - Division of Infectious Diseases, Rowan-Virtua Medicine Building, Stratford Campus at 856-566-7070 (press 6). Identify yourself as a SOM student with a potential bloodborne exposure and request an urgent appointment or further instructions.
- Save copies of incident reports and ER visit for follow up incident documentation

5. Follow Up Incident Documentation

- Complete the online [Rowan incident report](#), and email it to the Associate Director of Student Affairs. It is your responsibility to obtain copies of your incident report from the hospital/facility, and return your completed Rowan-Virtua SOM incident report.
- Carefully note the type of exposure, type of fluid/tissue involved and appropriate information about the source patient. (risk factors, lab data)
- Submit all claims to your health insurance company. Please note, this is not a worker compensation claim.
- Send outstanding bills and a copy of your Explanation of Benefits to the Associate Director of Student Affairs.
- The Office of the Dean at SOM will reimburse any residual expenses for acute exposure or injury not covered by the medical student's health or disability insurance. The student will not be responsible for costs incurred as part of the treatment of an acute occupational exposure or injury.

6. Learning Environment

- If a student has infection with a blood borne pathogen, they are required to confidentially discuss the matter with the Director of Student Health Services. The goals are to protect infected students from discrimination, protect student confidentiality, and protect patients during exposure prone procedures. The director will assess risk to patients, educate the student about their condition, review practices, and provide clinical care if the student does not want care from their own physician.
- In order to allow a student to return to the clinical setting following contraction of a communicable disease or disability due to an exposure, the Director of Student Health Services will make a recommendation based on the safety of all involved. If the disease or disability of the student can be accommodated, the student should contact Academic Affairs to request appropriate accommodations. If approved, the accommodations would be reviewed and implemented. All information will be strictly confidential.
- SOM is dedicated to ensuring that students with chronic conditions are not discriminated against and can continue in the educational program, despite the presence of a chronic condition, if at all possible with or without accommodations.

Front of Needlestick/Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Card



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NEEDLESTICK/BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN EXPOSURE GUIDELINES

Time is crucial! Act as follows:

- Wash exposure site thoroughly with soap and water.
- Notify the resident, rotation supervisor, or the nursing supervisor who should request source-person clinical information and blood work (e.g., HBsAG, HCV, antibody, HIV) unless HIV, HBV & HCV status is known.

On campus/Near Rowan-Virtua SOM/During business hours:

Immediately contact the SOM Department of Medicine – Division of Infectious Diseases, Rowan Medicine building, Stratford Campus at 856-566-7070 (press 6). Identify yourself as a SOM student with a potential bloodborne exposure and request an urgent appointment or further instructions.

Off campus/After business hours:

Go immediately to the nearest emergency department for evaluation or call 866-HIV-CHEC for advice and to locate the nearest emergency center.

Back of Needlestick/Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Card

Exposure Guidelines	• Receive appropriate tests, e.g., for HIV, HBV panel, HCV BUN, creatinine, U/A, LFTs, amylase, CBC with diff & pit, electrolytes, glucose, and urine pregnancy test, when appropriate. • Receive risk-assessment counseling and chemoprophylaxis (if needed). If elected, chemoprophylaxis should begin as soon as possible after exposure, best within hours of exposure. • All exposures MUST be reported. Complete an Incident Report form at the incident site as well as with Rowan-Virtua SOM. Call the Office of Student Affairs at 856-566-6482 for instructions.
Submitting Claims	• Submit all claims to your health insurance company. Please note, this is NOT a workers compensation claim. • For additional information, please scan the QR code below to reference the policy and procedure. 

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