

Immunisation and Blood-borne Viruses

At all stages of your medical training and subsequent medical practice, you will be exposed to patients with infectious diseases. It is essential that you protect yourself and prevent the transmission of infections to other patients. The Faculty of Medicine has implemented the *Immunisation and Blood-borne Viruses Policy*, which aims to minimise the risk of medical students contracting or spreading an infectious disease or blood-borne virus, such as HIV, and Hepatitis B or C. Compliance with this Policy will ensure that students can undertake clinical placements in teaching hospitals, which are administered by NSW Health.

Students are required to sign a statement indicating that they have read and agree to comply with the Policy at enrolment.

Students who undertake or could reasonably be expected to undertake exposure-prone procedures have a responsibility to take appropriate steps to know their infective status in relation to blood-borne viruses. All students in the Medicine Program could ordinarily be expected to undertake exposure-prone procedures and all students in the Program must know their infective status. A student who is aware he or she has a blood-borne virus infection must not undertake exposure-prone procedures.

Any infective student who knowingly undertakes an exposure-prone procedure or any student who in any other way endangers the health of patients will be reported to the Medical Board, which may refer the complaint to the Board's Impaired Practitioner Program. The Board may prohibit or restrict the student's right to undertake clinical studies or practice. Such a student would also be liable to criminal prosecution if a blood-borne virus is knowingly transmitted. Depending on the circumstances, the student could also be subject to the University's Student Misconduct Rules.

Faculty Immunisation Service

To ensure that the Faculty Policy is implemented systemically and properly recorded, an immunisation service has been established at Prince of Wales Hospital for all first year medical students. Students will be scheduled to attend a clinic at Prince of Wales Hospital outpatients. Students will be individually assessed, vaccinated and blood taken as necessary. This service is currently free of charge (subsidised by the Faculty of Medicine). It is very important that students attend at the time scheduled. Any subsequent visits will then be booked if necessary.

All medical students should do their best to research their own personal immunisation history and gather any documentation possible. Australian born children for instance, may be able to bring their 'blue book', a book in which all childhood vaccinations are recorded. Some may need to contact their childhood doctor for details.

Medical students should bring with them to their initial consultation:

Any available personal immunisation details.

Medicare card (or fund details for overseas students).

Students may choose to attend an alternate provider (University Health Service or GP) for this purpose but will need to provide documentation of attendance and compliance with the Faculty Policy to the Office of the Dean. This should document compliance with the NSW Health policy as specified below.

Requirements of NSW Health for clinical placements

Students on clinical placements in teaching hospitals of the UNSW are required to comply with the NSW Health policy on *Occupational Assessment, Screening and Vaccination against Specified Infectious Diseases* (Document No. PD2007_006). Students may be asked to provide documentary proof of compliance.

To comply with the requirements for the listed infectious diseases in this policy, you will need to provide the following documentation:

	Evidence of immunity or vaccination can be provided by either:
Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis	One documented dose of adult dTpa vaccine (e.g. Boostrix)
Hepatitis B	Positive serology (hepatitis B surface or core antibody). OR Positive hepatitis B surface antibody following previous vaccination ^a .
Measles, mumps and rubella	Positive serology for each virus. OR Documentation of receiving two doses of MMR.
Varicella	Past history of varicella or positive serology. OR Documentation of receiving two doses of varicella vaccine.
Tuberculosis	Documentation of Mantoux test

- a. A small proportion of students will not develop positive serology after vaccination. These students would need to provide documentation of completing the vaccine course (i.e. 3 doses).

Students who have participated in the Faculty's immunisation service at Prince of Wales Hospital should receive this documentation and keep it for future reference.

It is essential that if you cannot provide the required evidence prior to the time of a clinical placement, you must arrange for the appropriate tests and vaccinations to meet the requirements of the NSW Health policy.

Students who are unable to meet the requirements of the NSW Health policy may be excluded from clinical placements or have their clinical training program modified depending on the policy of the hospital.

Links with Information on Immunisations

The Australian Immunisation Handbook. 8th Edition, NHMRC
<http://www9.health.gov.au/immhandbook/>

Immunise Australia Program <http://immunise.health.gov.au/>

Royal Australasian College of General Practitioners Immunisation Online
<http://www.racgp.org.au/guidelines/vaccination>

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