

OREGON TECH DENTAL HYGIENE DEPARTMENT BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS POLICY

The Oregon Tech Dental Hygiene Department recognizes that bloodborne pathogens such as human immunodeficiency (HIV), Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) present a risk to students, faculty, staff and patients.

Preventing the transmission of bloodborne pathogens, including HBV, from patients to healthcare workers and from healthcare workers to patients requires a comprehensive approach that includes administering Hepatitis B vaccine to all susceptible healthcare workers at risk, viewing all blood as potentially infectious, using measures to reduce blood exposures, and having a staff committed to safe work practices. Critical elements to this approach include adherence to universal precautions, appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures, safe injection practices, and reducing the risks for injuries.

The department's infection control procedures including disinfection and sterilization procedures are outlined in the *Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual*. Methods for reducing risk exposure to bloodborne pathogens and post-exposure management are outlined in the *Exposure Control Plan*.

The purpose of the department's *Bloodborne Pathogens Policy* (BPP) and *Exposure Control Plan* (ECP) is to minimize the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Policies will be reviewed annually and changes recommended as appropriate. This policy is provided to faculty, staff, and students upon entry to the program and is available to others upon request. Departmental policy and specific procedures are in accordance with the Oregon Tech Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan.

STUDENTS

Standard Precautions

Standard precautions, as defined by CDC, are a set of precautions designed to prevent transmission of organisms spread by:

- Blood
- All body fluids, secretions, and excretions except sweat, regardless of whether they contain blood
- Non-intact skin
- Mucous membranes

Standard precautions are similar to universal precautions and are designed to reduce the risk of infection transmission from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection to patients and clinicians. Standard precautions apply to contact with blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions except sweat, regardless of whether they contain blood, non-intact skin and mucous membranes.

Standard precautions involve the use of protective barriers such as gloves, gowns, aprons, masks, or protective eyewear, which can reduce the risk of exposure of the healthcare worker's skin or mucous membranes to potentially infective materials. In addition, healthcare workers must take precautions to prevent injuries caused by needles, scalpels, and other sharp instruments or devices.

Provision of Dental Hygiene Services

Because adherence to current and accepted infection control procedures provides adequate protection for patients and healthcare providers from bloodborne infectious diseases, students and faculty are expected to provide dental hygiene services to and work with persons who have a bloodborne infectious disease. Faculty or students refusing to work with any patient will be counseled as to current medical information. A continued refusal to provide dental hygiene services to, or work with persons who have a bloodborne infectious disease, could cause an employee or student to be dismissed from the program.

Bloodborne Pathogen and Infection Control Training

Training in infection control procedures begins immediately in the pre-clinical course, fall term of the sophomore year of the Dental Hygiene program. Current CDC guidelines for infection control serve as the foundation for the infection control training program. Infection control procedures are outlined in the *Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual* and are reviewed annually.

Immunizations

The Oregon Tech Dental Hygiene program requires students at their own cost, upon admission, to receive a baseline tuberculosis skin test(s)¹; to obtain a varicella titer demonstrating immunity; and to begin the Hepatitis B vaccine series. Over the next six months of classes students will complete the Hepatitis B series followed by a titer to test for Hepatitis B antibodies. This process should be completed before students begin treating patients in the spring term.

Other required immunizations include:

1. tetanus within the past 10 years
2. two mumps, measles, rubella (MMR)
3. pertussis

It is also recommended that students receive the following immunizations:

1. influenza
2. meningitis

¹ Students taking the tuberculosis skin test for the first time will need to have two tests completed. Students who have tested positive for tuberculosis in the past must schedule a consultation with the department chair. Following the baseline test(s) subsequent tests will only be required if a student becomes symptomatic for the disease.

Copies of all immunization and titer records are to be submitted to the Oregon Tech Integrated Student Health Center in a timely manner. Failure to do so will require consultation with the Department Chair.

Students have the right to decline titer tests and immunizations. Those doing so are required to consult with the Department Chair and/or Integrated Student Health Center personnel.

Medical Conditions

In accordance with the Oregon Tech Policy on AIDS (OIT-30-040), students with HIV/AIDS will be allowed unrestricted classroom attendance, employment opportunities and participation in curricular and extracurricular activities as long as they are physically and mentally able and meet admission requirements.

Dental hygiene students do not perform invasive exposure-prone procedures such as maxillofacial surgery. Procedures performed by dental hygiene students are considered low-risk or no-risk for provider-to-patient blood exposure.

Chronic HBV or HIV infection should not preclude the student from practicing dental hygiene. Students with chronic infection will be managed as any other student with a personal health issue.

Clinic Restrictions

Any student or applicant to the program who has an acute or chronic medical condition making them susceptible to opportunistic infection should discuss with their personal physician or other qualified health professional whether their condition might affect their ability to safely perform dental hygiene services. The Dental Hygiene Department will follow CDC suggested work restrictions for healthcare personnel infected with or exposed to infectious diseases when determining if a student may begin or resume clinical activities.

Clinic Dismissal

Any student or healthcare personnel who engage in unsafe and/or careless clinical practice which creates risks to the health of patients, employees, or students shall be subject to disciplinary action. When such actions are brought to the attention of the Department Chair, the student or healthcare personnel may be suspended immediately from all patient activities pending a full investigation of the matter.

PATIENTS

Dental Hygiene Services

Patients infected with bloodborne pathogens can be safely treated in the Dental Hygiene Clinic. Current epidemiological evidence indicates that there is no significant risk of contracting bloodborne diseases through the provision of dental treatment when standard precautions are routinely followed. Therefore all patients, regardless of HIV, HBV, or HCV status will be provided dental hygiene services in the Oregon Tech Dental Hygiene Clinic. Standard precautions for ***all*** patients will be followed.

Confidentiality

All information regarding the health status of an individual is confidential and is considered protected health information. It is to be used only for treatment, payment and healthcare operations. A privacy notice explaining the use of health information is provided to patients at the initial appointment.