

UAB Blood/Body Fluid Exposure Guidelines

Updated 8-24-2012

This guideline outlines recommended actions following any blood/body fluid exposure to a UAB enrolled student or visiting scholar. For purposes of these guidelines, “student” is defined as “any student enrolled in UAB in a clinical, research, or classroom setting.” A “visiting scholar” is any student, graduate student, post-doctoral student, instructor, or practitioner participating in UAB clinical, research, or classroom activities for a short-term period.

Students and scholars may be exposed to blood/body fluids in the course of their clinical and/or research duties at a UAB facility or at a non-UAB facility where a student is involved in a practical experience for credit at UAB. As all blood and body fluids are considered infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual, all students and scholars must follow OSHA guidelines for universal precautions to prevent contact with blood or body fluids in classroom settings and clinical rotation sites. This includes use of gloves, eyewear, and protective clothing, as well as proper care of sharp objects and other precautionary measures. These guidelines are printed on UAB Medicine safety cards; students should keep a safety card with them and consult it in the event of exposure.

An “exposure” is generally defined as a percutaneous injury (e.g., a needle stick or cut with a sharp object) or contact of mucous membrane or non-intact skin with blood, tissue, or body fluids, whether or not there is visible blood.

In the case of any needlestick injury or other accidental blood/body fluid exposure, students and scholars should immediately take appropriate measures as follows:

- **Remove and properly dispose of all contaminated personal protective equipment.** Wash the exposed area thoroughly with soap and running water. Use antibacterial soap if possible. If blood/body fluid is splashed in the eye or on a mucous membrane, flush the affected area with running water for 15 minutes.
- **Report all exposures to a preceptor or clinical supervisor.**
- **Request that an incident report be filed at the host institution (if applicable) and at UAB.**
- **Gather the following information:**
 - a) Hepatitis and HIV status of the source patient. If a source patient’s serological status is unknown, the student, scholar, or preceptor/clinical supervisor should contact the source patient’s attending physician and request that the physician obtain a specimen for serologic testing. Recommended testing of the source patient includes a **Rapid HIV, HBsAg, and HCV antibody**. Be sure that the hosting institution draws labs from the source patient.

b) Baseline serologic evaluation of the student or scholar, including the following:

- HBV history and vaccination status
- HCV history
- Serology for **HBsAg and HBsAb, HIV Antibody, and HCV Antibody**

After taking appropriate immediate measures as outlined above, students or scholars should seek further evaluation and care based on where the incident occurred:

For exposures occurring **on the UAB campus** (UAB Hospital, Kirklin Clinic, UAB outpatient clinics, classrooms, research labs):

- During the day (7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) go to UAB Employee Health, UAB Spain Wallace 123 (extension 205-934-3675).
- After 5:00 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, call Hospital Paging (205-934-3411) and ask the operator to page the needlestick team member on call, who should then page the needlestick team.
- Continue to communicate with Employee Health regarding all follow-up care.

For exposures occurring **at a non-UAB hospital or clinic**:

- Inquire about the institution's exposure policy. If the hosting institution or physician's office offers to provide medical care and recommended testing, have an initial evaluation and follow-up performed there.
- If the hosting institution refuses to provide medical care and recommended testing, report to a local emergency room for initial treatment.
- If the hosting facility provides initial treatment, but refuses to provide long-term follow-up care, gather all serologic results from post-exposure, including the patient's lab work, and notify UAB Employee Health. UAB Employee Health will provide the long-term follow-up care at no charge.

All students or scholars in a clinical, classroom, and/or research placement will be covered for costs incurred in assessing and/or treating potential or actual exposures. This includes costs incurred for any appropriate services rendered (e.g., ER evaluation, including but not limited to lab work, post-exposure prophylactic therapy, immunizations provided onsite or at follow-up at UAB Employee Health), whether on campus or at a non-UAB hospital or clinic.

For treatment costs incurred outside of a UAB facility, please forward all invoices and/or proof of payment to:

UAB Hospital Employee Health
Suite SW123
619 19th Street South
Birmingham, AL 35249
Phone: 205-934-3675
Fax: 205-975-6900

For questions, UAB Employee Health may be reached by phone at 205-934-3675 during normal business hours or by email at employeehealth@uabmc.edu.