

SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY  
DENTISTRY Program

Policy Regarding Communicable Diseases and Occupational Health  
for Applicants to and Students of Schulich Dentistry

STATEMENT ON POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS

**Testing for Hepatitis B:**

Current information indicates that there is a potential risk of transmission of Hepatitis B from practitioner to patients in the clinical dental setting. Therefore, applicants will be required to be tested for Hepatitis B surface antigen by Student Health Services at Western University. Applicants who test positive for Hepatitis B surface antigen will be tested for Hepatitis B "e" antigen and Hepatitis B viral DNA to help determine infectivity risk. If Hepatitis B "e" antigen and/or Hepatitis B viral DNA is positive, the offer of acceptance will be withdrawn and registration to the DDS program will not be completed. Should a student's HBV serostatus change, his/her eligibility for admission could be reassessed.

Revised: June 2001

**Part 1 Applicants**

1. The Schulich Dentistry will inform applicants that:
  - They will be required to take part in the care of patients with various communicable diseases including hepatitis, TB, and AIDS, during their studies.
  - They will be trained in methods of preventing spread of communicable diseases (Standard Precautions including Body Substance and Universal Precautions).
  - There is a risk that they may contract a communicable disease during the course of their studies.
  - They have a responsibility to prevent the spread of communicable diseases to others.
  - They will be required to comply with Schulich Dentistry immunization requirements.
  - Students with a communicable disease may pursue their studies only as long as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or to others.
  - Students will be required to comply with provincial communicable disease surveillance protocols developed under the Public Hospitals Act Regulation 965.
  - Students may be required to give body fluid specimens if they are exposed to, or contract certain diseases while working in health care facilities.
2. Applicants with active tuberculosis are **required**, upon acceptance into the dental program, to inform the Director. Applicants who know that they test positive for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV are advised to inform the Director also. Students will be counselled re the disease and its impact on their education and career. Strict confidentiality concerning the applicant's state of health will be maintained.

## Part 2 Registered Students

### A Student Health and the Protection of Patients

All students are expected to be in a state of health such that they may participate in the academic program, including patient care, without posing a risk to themselves or to others.

1. Students with a communicable disease or other health problem may pursue their studies only as long as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. Such a health or safety hazard, if protracted, may preclude them from participation in clinical work essential to the satisfactory completion of their program of study.
2. Students who acquire a communicable disease are required to seek medical opinion.
3. In addition to complying with affiliated hospital regulations, students infected with active tuberculosis must notify the Director for counsel in regard to their clinical program.
4. Students who test positive for hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV are advised to consult with the Director for counsel in regard to their educational experiences and future career planning.
5. The health status of those students reporting shall remain confidential.
6. Students who have any of the following are to contact the Director who will in turn contact Student Health Services or the appropriate body in the relevant institution.
  - a. A major medical condition.
  - b. An infectious condition.
  - c. A significant allergic reaction including latex sensitivity and latex allergy.

### B Student-participation in Care of Patients with Communicable Diseases

1. Students are required to participate in the care of all patients assigned to them, including patients with communicable diseases. Such participation is necessary for the satisfactory completion of academic requirements.
2. All students are expected to read, understand and adhere to the infection control policies of the institutions in which they are working. This includes the principles of Standard Precautions (Body Substance Precautions and Universal Precautions).
3. Students are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner which is consistent with the health and safety of themselves and others and shall be given appropriate training to do so.
4. Students are required to comply with the immunization policies of Schulich Dentistry.

## **C Tuberculosis Surveillance**

1. Prior to the first day of classes in first year the student must provide proof of a negative two step Mantoux TB skin test. This must have been done at some time in the student's lifetime. (Proof is required)
  - a. If this was done less than a year prior to the student's registration in year one of the dental program then no further TB testing is necessary.
  - b. If over a year has transpired since two step TB testing or subsequent one step testing has been done then a one step test must be done prior to entering the program and proof of results submitted.
2. Prior to the first day of classes for all subsequent years, the student must provide proof of a negative one step Mantoux TB skin test current within the last 12 months.
3. **For known positive reactors**, prior to the first day of classes in first year and all subsequent years, proof of a single P.A. chest x-ray current within the last 12 months will supplant regulations 1 & 2.

N.B. Students who are skin test <b>positive</b> but on chest x-ray are shown <b>not</b> to have active TB are strongly urged to consult with Student Health Services re INH prophylaxis. The Director may advise students in this regard.
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4. Any student who is identified by an affiliated teaching institution as a TB contact **must** report immediately to Student Health Services at Western for appropriate testing. If the student is out of town on a placement, reporting to the hospital employee health unit is an acceptable alternative. Confirmation of this process **in writing** must be delivered to the Director's Office.

## **D Immunization Policy (to be met by all FIRST-TIME students in the Dental Program)**

(Pay particular attention to the bolded words in each item)

1. **Tetanus Toxoid**  
Primary immunization **must** be completed and a booster must have been received within the previous ten years. If no booster in last 10 years, students must obtain a booster using Td (tetanus diptheria) absorbed.
2. **Polio IPV**  
Primary series **must** have been completed.
3. **Rubella**  
If no previous immunization or serologic evidence is less than 1:16 then immunization is **recommended** (with informed consent).
4. **MMR**  
Immunization is **recommended** (with informed consent) if no documented history of measles, or no lab evidence of immunity, or no documentation of vaccination for measles with live virus on or after the 1<sup>st</sup> birthday.
5. **Varicella**  
If the student cannot give a history of having had chicken pox, it is **recommended** that students be screened for VZU antibodies. If antibody negative, it is **recommended** that the student be immunized against varicella. **(This is now available for a fee in Canada. To save money, year one students are advised to check with the Office of Admissions re the prospects of Student Health immunization clinics for this during the first few weeks of classes).**
6. **Hepatitis B**

Students who are not immune to hepatitis B virus **must** commence immunization against Hepatitis B by the 30th of September of the year of registration into year one of the program. **(Because there can be a cost associated with this, to save money students are advised to check with the Office of Admissions re Student Health Immunization clinics during the fall of the year).**

Testing for antibodies to hepatitis B surface antigen to confirm seroconversion after immunization is **mandatory**. (This may be done at Student Health).

Those with negative (nil or inadequate antibody response) post immunization serology **are strongly advised** to obtain a booster and subsequent re-check of antibody levels. (This can be arranged at Student Health). Those who **know** that they test Hepatitis B antigen positive **are expected to** report to the Director for counselling regarding:

- a. Further testing.
- b. Patient-related procedures which will be prohibited or modified during training.
- c. Future career planning.

#### 7. **Hepatitis C**

Those who know that they test Hepatitis C antigen positive are expected to report to the Director for counselling regarding:

- a. Patient-related procedures which will be prohibited or modified during training.
- b. Future career planning.

#### 8. **HIV**

Students who **know** that they are HIV positive should inform themselves of Western University **Policy on AIDS and the Schulich Dentistry Policy on HIV** and consult with the Schulich Dentistry Advisor (currently Dr. Michael Rieder: Tel: 519-661 2111, ext: 58293 - secretary).

**THESE POLICIES WILL BE REVIEWED ON A REGULAR BASIS AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

### **Part 3      Procedures to be Followed in the Event of Workplace Injury**

#### ***Needlestick and Puncture Wound Injuries***

- i. On Campus  
The individual should **immediately** contact Student Health Services for treatment and to arrange follow-up.
- ii In Affiliated Institutions  
The individual should **immediately** contact the Occupational Health and Safety Office or the Emergency Department for treatment and to arrange follow-up.

#### **Other Injuries**

The treatment and follow-up of students who are injured as a result of their clinical placement will be provided by Student Health Services or the Occupational Health and Safety Office of the affiliated institution. The relevant teacher (off campus) or the Director of Clinics must be notified immediately for first aid and treatment and advice. At an appropriate time an Incident/Accident report form must be completed. If the illness is serious and requires prompt medical attention, the student may be referred to the Emergency Department.

#### **Part 4 Penalty for Failure to Comply with this Policy**

1. At the time of registration into first year, students are required to submit their immunization Record to the Director. Students who do not provide documentation of updated immunization may be suspended from clinical training until the proper documentation is provided.
2. Failure to comply with other aspects of this policy may result in a student being barred from access to patients and thereby rendered incapable of meeting academic requirements. Other academic sanctions may be imposed on a case by case basis.