

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE UGME Policy on Exposure to Infectious Disease and Environmental Hazards (excluding international electives)	Policy sponsor: Associate Deans UGME	Approval date: October 4, 2011 (Faculty Council)
	Responsible unit: Undergraduate Medical Education Office	Amendments: September 28, 2023 – UMECC December 5, 2023 – Faculty Council

A. Background & Purpose

Dalhousie University is committed to the provision of a safe and healthy work and learning environment and has numerous health and safety policies that support the Dalhousie Environmental Health and Safety Policy. Undergraduate medical education is provided on Dalhousie campuses, and within affiliated health care centres in an environment where clinical education is integrated with clinical service. Research activities occur in laboratory and clinical settings. All of Dalhousie’s affiliated health care centres have environmental health and safety policies that regulate the activities of those operating within such facilities. Participation in the undergraduate medical education program carries with it the risk that a medical student may be exposed to an infectious or environmental hazard.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate processes are in place so that medical students, faculty, and staff have consistent procedures to follow in the event of such an exposure for students to be directed to appropriate treatment and follow-up.

B. Application

This policy applies to Dalhousie and visiting undergraduate medical students participating in medical education sessions including clinical and research activities on campus and within affiliated environments.

C. Definitions

1. Exposure incident refers to an injury or exposure to an infectious or environmental hazard.
2. HBV refers to Hepatitis B
3. HBC refers to Hepatitis C
4. HIV refers to Human Immunodeficiency Virus

D. Policy

1. Medical students are required to review materials and attend sessions providing instruction on environmental health and safety policies, infection prevention and control, and rules and procedures affecting their educational and research activities in all facilities to which they are assigned.

2. In the case of an exposure:
Immediate actions:
 - Remove contaminated clothing
 - Allow immediate bleeding for needlestick/laceration
 - Wash injured area with soap and water
 - Flush mucous membrane or eye splash with water or saline for 15 minutes
 - Determine HIV, HBV, HBC status of patient
3. Students who experience an exposure incident in a Dalhousie University facility or an affiliated health care facility shall follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of the relevant environmental health and safety policies then in effect at the respective institution.
4. Students who experience an exposure incident shall report the incident to the preceptor, Unit Head or Clerkship Director of the unit or rotation in which the student was participating at the time of the exposure incident. The student will then be directed to Occupational/Employee Health or the Emergency Department, or an on-call physician for bloodwork and consideration of HIV post-exposure prophylaxis and/or HBV Immune Globulin. and their home campus Student Affairs office. Unit Heads and Clerkship Directors shall forward reports of exposure incidents to home campus Assistant Dean Student Affairs.
5. Students are to report the incident to their home campus Student Affairs Office. Reports of exposure incidents shall be held in strict confidence. Information is to be used by the Assistant Dean Student Affairs only as necessary to follow up with the student experiencing the exposure incident. Student Affairs is responsible to ensure that treatment and follow-up measures are being undertaken and to assist the student in addressing any accommodation or adjustment to their participation in the academic program that may be required due to any injuries sustained. Please refer to *Policy for Undergraduate Students with a Communicable Infection* available on the [UGME website](#).
6. Financial costs associated with treatment of exposure incidents shall be the responsibility of the medical student. Medical students are required to participate in the medical plan provided through the Dalhousie Student Union or in a comparable plan that provides comparable coverage for treatment arising from such incidents.

E. Administrative Structure

1. Authority: This Policy is sponsored by and falls under the authority of the Associate Deans UGME.
2. Undergraduate Medical Education: Undergraduate Medical Education is the unit responsible for the administration of this Policy.
3. Student Affairs: Assists in promotion of the Policy
4. Policy Review: This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with Dalhousie's Policy on Policies or earlier if deemed necessary by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine

F. Procedures

Additional procedures will be developed for this policy as necessary