

Blood/Body Fluid Exposure

Universal blood and body fluid precautions lessen the risk of exposure to such fluids, and these precautions must be used routinely. Medical students are in many situations during clinical activities where breaks in skin (“sharps” injuries) or mucosal contact may expose them to possibly infectious blood or body fluids.

Students are assigned to several affiliated hospitals as well as University Hospitals. The protocols at each institution are slightly different. The following, however, are common to all facilities:

- Decontaminate (wash with disinfectant) the exposed or contaminated site immediately.
- Make a note of the patient’s name, hospital number, attending physician, and location.
- Report to your immediate supervisor (attending or resident physician).
- Have the injury inspected and an incident report filled out by a supervisor (e.g., resident or head nurse).
- Report the injury as soon as possible to Hospital Epidemiology and Student Health. Notify the attending physician of the patient. Usually, this is done by Hospital Epidemiology or OSU Wilce Student Health Center, since it is the hospital’s responsibility to have the patient’s blood drawn and tests done. The attending physician, though, may order the appropriate testing.
- **If outside of regular hours or if there is an emergency in addition to the exposure, go to the ER (if in town in Columbus or otherwise possible, to the OSU ER). Otherwise, go to the OSU Wilce Student Health Center.**
- The injured student’s blood may be drawn for baseline serologies at the OSU Wilce Student Health Center, an OSU Emergency room or, if the student is out of Franklin County at the nearest emergency room.
- In the event of a needle stick, the student should call the OSU Wilce Student Health Center Appointment Line at 614-292-4321. They should identify themselves as a medical student who has had a needle stick injury, and they should be routed to the triage nurse for an ASAP appointment. Dr. Sheila Westendorf (614-292-8794) can also be contacted if there are any questions or difficulties. Reports of tests should be sent to the Wilce Student Health Center for follow-up and appropriate medical recording.
- Notify the Associate Dean for Student Life (carmine.grieco@osumc.edu) or the Associate Dean for Medical Education (jennifer.mccallister@osumc.edu) or the dean on call.
- Regardless of where the initial urgent care is received, all follow-up care of a BBFE should be obtained through the Wilce Student Health Center.
- Bills for initial assessment should be submitted to the student’s health insurance. Any uncovered costs and bills should be brought to 155 Meiling Hall (office of the Associate Dean for Student Life). OSU COM will not cover bills from other hospitals in Franklin County for exposures – if in Franklin County, please go to an OSU emergency room.