



**GREAT FALLS  
COLLEGE**

**MONTANA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

## GFC MSU Health Science General Health Policy

### Policy

All Health Science students must complete the required Great Falls College MSU Student Immunization and Verification Form and submit it to their Program Director after acceptance into their program. If a student has an illness or infectious disease or has sustained an injury which could potentially be exacerbated by attendance at a clinical site or by participating in a laboratory experience on campus or could potentially place a fellow student or patient at risk, the student has an obligation to seek treatment of the medical problem or injury. A signed release form from a physician or other healthcare provider must be submitted to the Program Director before the student will be allowed to participate in a lab or clinical experience.

### Rationale

Future healthcare providers must understand the impact of personal health and safety in on-campus labs and at clinical sites. Patients who seek healthcare are vulnerable due to altered health/risk status and must be protected; the safety of fellow students on campus must also be recognized. Health Sciences students who are potential health/safety risks to others or themselves should not have contact with patients at clinical sites or participate in potentially unsafe situations on campus. The potential unsafe situation must be discussed with the program director.

### Recommendations

All Health Science students will submit a physical examination form and complete required immunizations to their Program Director after acceptance into their program. At registration, the student will select or waive their comprehensive health insurance. It is expected that the student carries comprehensive health insurance as indicated on Banner Web. There are health risks inherent in working in a clinical environment. Students are urged to use good sense in acquiring and maintaining health insurance coverage. Liability insurance which covers students while attending clinical sites is included in student lab fees for each program. This is not health insurance for the student; liability insurance covers the student in the event of harm or injury caused to a patient the student is treating at a clinical site.

# Required Health Screening Tests and General Safety Guidelines

## Communicable Disease Prevention Policy and Immunization Policy

In compliance with Montana state law, students born after January 1, 1957, who are taking seven or more credits or are enrolled in a certificate or degree program must:

| <b>Must show one of the following</b>   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Submit documentation immunizations were given after 1967 and after the student's first birthday and must have been administered at least thirty (30) days apart. Current immunizations must have been administered in the form of the MMR vaccine. Immunizations must be documented by a physician, registered nurse, or school official. | Submit documentation of having contracted measles and rubella. Documentation by a titer is required. | File a medical or religious exemption. | A written statement of declination from the student. |

Evidence of one of the above must be submitted before students can register for courses. Please note that students are expected to complete mandatory clinical enhancement experience in other health care facilities that may require these vaccinations or other vaccines not listed. If this is the case, students who are not vaccinated will not be able to participate. If reasonable alternatives cannot be found a student could fail those courses.

### TB Policy

A two-step screening for TB must be done upon entry into any Health Science program. Evidence of screening must be provided to the Program Director. The student may be asked to provide a repeat screening based on the clinical site's policy, with evidence of update provided to the Program Director to be kept on file during the program of study. Students are expected to follow health practices protecting both their patients and them. Clinical sites require proof of students TB tests prior to allowing attendance at the clinical internship. Failure to show proof of TB test within the last 12 months will result in denial of access to the dental clinic or other clinic sites.

### Hepatitis B Series

The college strongly recommends Health Science students who will be working in direct patient contact areas to receive the Hepatitis B vaccine series. Students are urged to use good sense in protecting themselves against health risks and potentially infectious diseases in the

clinical environment. If a student declines to receive the Hepatitis B series, a signed declination form will be kept in the student's file. Students are encouraged to discuss the benefits of receiving the Hepatitis B series with their health care provider. Students must also be aware that certain clinical sites will not allow students access to their facility unless they have completed the series.

## Needle Sticks and Sharps

On campus when practicing patient care techniques involving needles and other sharp instruments, students are expected to follow guidelines and protocols as outlined by their instructor. When attending clinical internships, the protocol of the facility will be followed.

Red biohazard containers are available in all labs in which the use of needles or sharps is a component of the learning experience and lab. Needles must not be recapped, bent, broken, or clipped, removed from syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. Disposable needles, syringes, blades, razors, and other sharps must be disposed of in the red biohazard containers. Students must never place their hands inside the red container, and if the container is full, they should ask the instructor for a new container.

In the event of accidental needle stick with a contaminated needle, at a clinical site, the student must follow the procedures as outlined by the clinical site, and submit a "Report of Exposure to Communicable Disease" form as found in the medical emergency cart in the dental clinic. The Program Director will keep the completed form in the student's file, and follow-up with any protocol as established by the facility. In the event of an accidental needle stick with a contaminated needle or an exposure to body fluid to non-intact skin, mucous membrane, or by percutaneous injury during an on-campus lab or in clinic, the student should comply with the Needle Stick Protocol found in the medical emergency cart in the dental clinic and submit a "Report of Exposure to Communicable Disease" form to the program director. It is critical to follow these steps because if a source, the person whose blood or body fluid to which the student was exposed, is positive for HIV transmission, there are medications that are available that prevent HIV transmission. These medications, however, are most effective when started within two hours after an exposure.

The source and student will be encouraged to seek this counseling so they can receive the appropriate medical treatment and the needed information to prevent further exposure. The source individual will be encouraged to make available the results of the test to the student and the Program Director copies of all reports will be kept by the Program Director in the student's file. The Program Director will follow-up with the source and the student following the current guidelines as outlined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and policies as outlined by the City/County Health Department. The program director will also inform the Health Sciences Division Director of the incident; however, the names of the source and student will not be shared for confidentiality purposes.

# Blood and Body Fluids

At clinical sites, procedures for handling blood, body fluids or any types of secretions must be followed in accordance with the facility's policies and procedures. In case of a blood or secretion spill, students must follow procedures outlined by the facility. Never leave a spill unattended: either clean the spill according to facility protocol (depending on the circumstance) or wait until housekeeping personnel arrive.

- If there is blood, body fluid or any type of secretion spilled in the campus lab, don gloves and lay dry paper towels on the spill to absorb the fluid then layer a second set of disinfectant soaked paper towels over the spill.
- There will be a container in your lab which holds a mixture of bleach diluted in water at 1:10. Use this mixture to soak the paper towels. Notify your instructor there has been a contaminated spill.
- Encircle the spill with additional disinfectant being careful to minimize aerosolization while assuring adequate contact.
- Decontaminate all items within the spill area. Allow a minimum of 20 minutes contact time to ensure disinfection.
- Discard contaminated disposable materials using appropriate Biohazardous waste disposal procedures.
- Spray down the area again with the bleach solution and wipe clean, disposing of all paper towels in the Biohazardous bag: tie the bag and dispose of the bag in one of the large red Biohazardous containers located near the dental clinic. Your instructor will tell you the location of the large containers.

## Linen

When handling any types of linen (sheets, pillowcases, towels, etc.) at clinical sites, take care to minimally agitate the materials due to airborne contamination. In many facilities, paper products are used in certain areas. All soiled linen should be bagged at the location of its use: it should not be sorted or rinsed in patient care areas. Follow facility procedures in disposing of soiled linens to appropriate areas.

If using linens in on-campus lab, your instructor will inform you about your program's care and laundering of any linen. The washer and dryer utilized for the dental clinic is found in the dental locker room.

## Disposal of Hazardous Waste

Biohazardous waste is disposed of in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. Any full sharps containers or red biohazard bags containing contaminated material must never be left in a lab after class: assist your instructor in disposing of materials in the appropriate container or area. At clinical sites, always follow facility procedures. There are usually many bio-hazard containers available in all patient care areas.

## Additional Precautions

If a student has an exudative lesion, weeping dermatitis or any skin lesion which could potentially transmit disease through touch, the student should refrain from patient care and from handling patient equipment until the condition resolves. Students should notify their instructor of the condition, and it is up to the course instructor to allow students with these conditions into the on-campus lab. Students working in direct patient care areas that are pregnant or suspect they may be pregnant should inform their program director. Pregnant women must be particularly cautious when working with certain types of patients. Your program director, course instructor and clinical preceptor should be aware of your pregnancy to minimize any risks to your health and safety.

### Resuscitation Equipment

At the College, there is an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) mounted to the wall outside of the Dental Clinic on the northeast side of the campus building. When at the clinical site, students must know where to locate nearby resuscitation equipment. Students should ask their clinical preceptor about facility procedures when responding to an emergency. This information is usually included in the facility orientation when students first arrive at the site. Students must provide proof of a current CPR card before they begin the first week of class.

### Exposure to or Diagnosis of a Communicable Disease Policy

This policy prevents disease spread to other students, patients, and the community. The procedures attached to this policy have an approved, uniform, and planned approach for assisting students who have been exposed to or contracted a communicable disease. The student is responsible for being knowledgeable about communicable diseases and their own role as a potential source of infection or their responsibility for the health and safety of others. This is especially significant in the clinical setting when working with patients already in a debilitated and medically compromised condition.

This policy refers to any communicable condition which potentially threatens student or patient safety. Examples would be strep throat, herpes, scabies, rubella, tuberculosis, hepatitis, or HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). A student who suspects contact, has contact, is exposed to, or contracts a communicable disease must report such contacts/diagnosis to his or her Program Director immediately. Contact may be direct touch, needle stick, airborne or handling of contaminated materials or equipment. Compliance with the policy and procedures as follows is the responsibility of the student.

When attending a clinical site, students are to report suspected or real contact with a communicable disease to their clinical preceptor immediately following the event. The clinical preceptor will follow the facility's procedures and notify the Program Director. The student should also contact the Program Director as soon as possible after the event.

If a student has a communicable disease, or may have come in contact with one, outside the clinical setting (for example chicken pox or other common but contagious disease) the student must notify the Program Director who will then determine if the student should be allowed to attend on-campus classes or the clinical internship.

If it is confirmed the student has a communicable disease, they must follow-up with appropriate medical care and inform the Program Director. Decisions pertaining to the

student's continuation or postponement of any type of coursework will be made on a case-by-case basis, based on the severity of the disease, at the discretion of the Program Director. The health and safety of the student, patients and other students will always be a deciding factor in these cases. The most up-to-date information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) will be used as guidelines for decision-making.

Approved, Health Sciences Division

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie R. Powell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director, Health Science Division  
Reviewed/Revised 7/28/2023



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## Report of Exposure to Communicable Disease

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Communicable Disease Exposed to: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and Time of Exposure: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Exposure: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Incident:

Report to Program Director Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Report of Initial Visit to Physician or other Provider, including treatment plan:

Student Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Report of Follow-Ups:

Student Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Director Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_