

INFECTION CONTROL AND BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Infection Control is an important concern in the dental laboratory work environment. Early in the program lectures will be given on infection control in the dental laboratory environment. This material will be reinforced in each of the courses and hands on application will be practiced in the laboratory sessions. To minimize the risk of exposure it is very important to understand and adhere to infection control protocols prior to working on any cases in which materials have been exposed to potential infectious agents. The majority of the case work that is accomplished in the first year of the program is done with technique cases and has not been exposed to actual oral environments. There is very little risk of exposure to infectious agents from these technique cases, practice of infection control procedures will start in the first year of the program prior to any work on cases that have been taken from live patients. During the summer externship students will be sent to dentist offices and commercial laboratories where you should be aware and practice proper infection control precautions.

Bloodborne pathogens can impact individuals who are exposed to blood and other potentially infectious materials. Bloodborne pathogens refer to pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood that can cause disease. Bloodborne pathogens include the hepatitis B virus (HBV); the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS; the hepatitis C virus (HCV); and pathogens that cause malaria. No vaccine exists for the HCV and HIV, a vaccine does exist for the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV). In recognition of these potential hazards, OSHA has implemented a regulatory standard [Bloodborne Pathogens 29 CFR 1910.1030: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodborne pathogens/>] to prevent the transmission of bloodborne diseases within potentially exposed occupations.

The student wellness center offers vaccination for Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) to students in allied health majors which include students of the Restorative Dentistry Department. The HBV vaccination is a series of three doses given over a period of time. To sign up to receive the vaccination a notice will be posted listing the dates when the vaccination will be offered, sign-up for the vaccination is in the Restorative Dentistry department office Room P409. The vaccine is available free of charge for any Restorative Dentistry student who does not have insurance that covers the vaccination. Students under the age of 18 must either come with a parent/guardian or bring a notarized letter from the parent/guardian authorizing consent to be immunized at the Student Wellness Center. Immunization card should be brought at the time of the vaccination so that the wellness center can record the vaccination in your records.

For more information on HBV vaccination contact
the Student Wellness Center in P104
phone: 718-260-5910

While the potential for exposure to infectious agents and bloodborne pathogens in the dental laboratory work environment exist, knowledge of the risks and protocols to minimize the chance of exposure can keep the work environment safe for all members of the dental health team.

Through the coursework in the program students will be informed of the known risks and will be instructed on protocols that will minimize those risks.

For additional information on this topic refer to the following links

Statement of Infection Control in Dentistry, ADA: <http://www.ada.org/1857.aspx>

Occupational Safety & Health Administration OSHA:
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/dentistry/index.html>

Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings:
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5217a1.htm>

CUNY Laboratory Safety Manual:
<http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/ehsrm/CUNYLabSafetyManualfv120110.pdf>