A Guide to your Vaccination & Screening Clinic Appointment

Prepared by OHWorks Ltd
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Dear Student

We are an independent Occupational Health service. We are undertaking your screening to ensure you are fit for clinical placement on your healthcare course.

Health questionnaire

By now you should have completed an online health questionnaire. If you have not done so, you must complete one today. Please go to www.healthquestionnaire.co.uk/city2016 to complete the health questionnaire. You must also ensure that a copy is signed and stamped by your GP and returned as soon as possible. You will not be allowed on to your course if you have not completed both steps of the process.

If you did not declare any health problems on your health questionnaire or if we felt your health condition would not affect your ability to undertake your clinical placement you will have received automatic clearance.

Other students may not yet be cleared. This may be because we are still processing your questionnaire or you may have declared a health condition that we would like to follow up. This is to ensure that we put in place the appropriate support for you to be able to undertake your course. We also need to ensure that you will be well enough to complete your course.

For those students where we require additional information we will contact you to advise you to see our OH nurse advisor, who will undertake a health interview with you. This may be by telephone or on campus. Please be as honest as possible during this consultation. One of the main reasons for this consultation is for us to advise the University what additional support you will require on the course. It is rare for us not to allow someone to undertake their course and in these rare exceptions it is because we believe we cannot make modifications to enable you to safely undertake the clinical element required on your course.

Refusal of vaccinations and blood screening

We require you to receive vaccinations against some infectious diseases if you do not already have immunity to them. Whilst we cannot force you to have a vaccination it is unlikely we will allow you to undertake a clinical placement without having this course of vaccination and therefore the University is unlikely to accept you onto the course.

If you have received vaccinations from your General Practitioner (GP) or another occupational health service you will need to provide us with evidence of your vaccination/blood test. Please show this to the nurse. Your health clearance will be processed much more quickly if you are able to take all relevant documentation to the first appointment. If you have worked in healthcare before and know that you have evidence of immunity to Hepatitis B, Measles, Rubella, Varicella and TB, please forward a copy of your occupational health certificate to city@ohworks.co.uk. Please put ‘2016 entry OH records’ in the subject title. We will review the records and advise if you need to attend an appointment.

Hepatitis B and the benefits of vaccination

Hepatitis B is caused by the Hepatitis B virus. It may start as an acute disease, causing a mild illness that lasts for a few weeks, or can be a severe illness from which you die. But in some people the Hepatitis B virus lingers, causing a lifelong chronic illness that causes long-term liver problems. Even people who have had the disease for 20 or 30 years without symptoms are at risk of serious liver problems, such as cirrhosis or liver cancer.
Hepatitis B is spread when blood, semen, or other bodily fluid of someone who has it enters the body of someone who does not. An infected mother can pass the disease on to her child at birth. You can also get the disease by:

- Having unprotected sex with an infected partner
- Sharing needles, syringes, or other drug paraphernalia
- Using something that may contain an infected person’s blood, such as a razor or toothbrush
- Coming in direct contact with the blood of someone who has the disease
- Being exposed to blood from needle sticks or other sharp instruments.

It takes only 0.00004 mls of blood to transmit the virus. The virus can also live outside the body on dirty instruments for up to a week.

**Symptoms of acute Hepatitis B include:**

- Fever
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Dark urine
- Clay-coloured bowel movements
- Joint pain
- Jaundice

Many people who are a carrier of Hepatitis B have no symptoms at all and are not aware they are a carrier. The best protection against developing Hepatitis B is to be vaccinated against the virus as it is very infectious – there is up to a 30% chance of acquiring the virus from an infected carrier if you become exposed.

**How effective is the vaccine and is it safe?**

The vaccine for Hepatitis B is highly effective. Nearly 100% of all adults who receive one dose develop protective levels of antibodies within one month of receiving a single dose. It is important, however, to complete the course of three vaccinations and have a blood test afterwards to ensure immunity is achieved. Once immune you cannot acquire the infection, even if you come into contact with it.

As with all medications, there is the potential for side effects. But the safety record of the vaccine is outstanding. The most common side effect of the Hepatitis B vaccine is soreness at the site of the injection. Since 1982, when the Hepatitis B vaccine became available, more than 100 million people have been vaccinated. In that same time period, the incidence of acute Hepatitis B declined by about 82%.

Serious side effects include a severe allergic reaction within a few minutes of receiving the vaccination, but such occurrences are extremely rare. As an occupational health provider, we have never had an individual have a severe reaction; we provide several thousand vaccinations of Hepatitis B a year and would strongly advise anyone who is in contact with patients’ body fluids to receive vaccination.
**Vaccination schedule**

The course requires three vaccines. You will have the first at your first appointment, the second in one month’s time and the third six months from your first appointment. One to four months after the third vaccination you will require a blood test to ensure you have responded to the vaccination. In some cases, people require a booster vaccination, as their immunity levels are not quite sufficient. Some people simply do not respond to the vaccination and are not immune. It is important to identify these people so we can advise what you need to do if you were exposed to a patient’s body fluids. You must complete the course and have a blood test before we release your vaccination and immunity report to you. You will need this when looking for employment after graduation.

**Chickenpox (varicella)**

As you will be having contact with patients we require you to be immune to chickenpox. This is to ensure you do not ‘catch’ this from a patient but also it is important to protect you and patients from this, particularly those who have cancer, are immunocompromised or are pregnant.

We need to have a clear history from your GP that you have had chickenpox OR a copy of a blood test result demonstrating you have immunity OR evidence of vaccination. Students born outside the UK will need to be screened for chickenpox if no documentary evidence is provided. A verbal history of infection is sufficient for those born in the UK. If you have no evidence of immunity we will take a blood test today to ascertain this. If you then require vaccination because you are not immune we will advise you of this.

**Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR)**

We need to ensure you are immune to measles and rubella so that you do not transmit this to patients and we need to ensure we protect you from acquiring it whilst on your clinical placement.

We need to see documentary evidence of a blood test demonstrating you have immunity to measles and rubella OR evidence of receiving two MMR vaccinations. If you are immune to rubella and measles you are considered likely to be immune to mumps and therefore we do not need to screen you for mumps. Please bring evidence of your childhood vaccinations such as red baby book or a print out from your GP as this may save you from having a blood test.

If you have no evidence of immunity we will take a blood test at your first appointment to ascertain this. If you then require vaccination because you are not immune we will advise you of this.

Please note we have hundreds of blood test results to process so it is likely to take us some time to contact you. We will, however, ensure you have the appropriate notification and vaccination before you go on your first clinical placement.

**Tuberculosis (TB)**

We need to ensure you are provided with some protection against TB whilst on your clinical placement. Vaccination does not necessarily make you immune but provides you with protection; we cannot say how much and for how long, but it is thought to be around fifteen years to a lifetime in some cases.

We will be looking for evidence of a BCG scar (likely to be on your left upper arm) or evidence from your GP that you have had the BCG vaccination. If you do not have this we will arrange a separate appointment for you to have a Mantoux skin test or a blood test if you have recently arrived from a country with high rates of TB.
IMPORTANT: If you need a Mantoux test we will inform you of the date of your two appointments. There will be an appointment for the test and a second for the nurse to check the result of the test 48 hours later and, where appropriate, give you a BCG vaccination. You **MUST** attend both appointments. Failure to attend Mantoux appointments is probably the main reason why students miss the deadline for being cleared for placement. We will **NOT** arrange a one-off Mantoux appointment: we arrange Mantoux clinics when lots of students requiring the test can attend on the same date. It is therefore extremely important that you attend the dates that you are given and do not miss them.

*Please note:* There is currently a UK shortage of mantoux and BCG vaccine. *The Department of Health has confirmed that students will be able to commence clinical placement without vaccination. We will recall you when the supply situation changes.*

Midwifery students
Midwifery students will be undertaking exposure prone procedure (EPP) work and will be screened for HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B surface antigen, in accordance with Department of Health regulations. You will need to provide photographic ID such as driving licence or passport at the time of the blood test.

Free HIV test
All students may request a free HIV test. Simply ask the nurse for a test.

Meningitis
Rates of Meningitis W are increasing, especially in new university entrants. All students under the age of 25 are eligible for a free MenACWY vaccination. Please contact your GP surgery for vaccination. This is not available through Occupational Health.

Future appointments
If a student fails to attend a vaccination and screening appointment with the Occupational Health Nurse (or cancels within 24 hours of the appointment time), there will be a charge of **£20**. If a student fails to attend a referral appointment with the Occupational Health Advisor, the Occupational Health Physician or Consultant Psychiatrist (or cancels within 24 hours of the appointment time), there will be a charge of **£50**.

If a student informs OHWorks (by phone or email) at least 24 hours before their appointment time that they are unable to attend, there will be no charge.

Some students have jeopardised the start of their placements by not engaging with occupational health. It is your responsibility to ensure that you comply with all occupational health procedures. Do not leave the process until the last minute. Please ensure that your online health questionnaire and GP questionnaires are completed as soon as possible and that you have located all of your vaccination records ready for the immunisation clinics. Please remember that failure to complete the occupational health process means failure to comply with the requirements of your course.