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**IV0600: Communicable Diseases in Employees**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 2006

**REVISED DATE:** November 2010,  
December 2012

**REVIEWED DATE:**

**1.0 PURPOSE**

To provide guidance in the prevention and management of healthcare provider exposures to and infections with infectious diseases in the work place.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

**Exposure** – may occur when a healthcare provider is in direct or indirect contact with patient or co-worker who has a known or suspected infection with a communicable disease. This contact may occur through, but is not limited to, needle-stick, injuries, splashes, airborne droplets, contact with nasal or throat secretions or close contact during examinations/treatment.

**Healthcare Provider** – includes Interior Health staff, physicians, students, volunteers, and all persons who work within the Interior Health facilities.

**Risk Assessment** – healthcare providers are at risk of exposure to communicable diseases because of their contact with patients or material from patients with infections both diagnosed and undiagnosed. Use of immunization agents assists in protecting patients and healthcare providers from becoming infected.

**3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES** – Refer to AV0900 – Prevention and Management of Occupational Exposure to Communicable Diseases:

[AV0900 – Prevention and Management of Occupational Exposure to Communicable Diseases](#)

**PROCEDURE**

4.18 EMPLOYEE WORK RESTRICTIONS WITH COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	
<b>Employees may not work in the healthcare environment during the known period of communicability for:</b>	
Chickenpox (Varicella zoster)	Until all lesions are dried and crusted and no new lesions are forming.
Diarrhea/Vomiting	Until 48 hours after symptoms have resolved.
Influenza	Restrict until 5 days after symptoms began or until symptoms have resolved whichever is longer.
Measles (Rubeola)	Until 4 days after rash appears, or duration of illness in Immunodeficient individuals.
Mumps	For 9 days after onset of swelling; less if swelling has subsided.
Parvovirus B19 (fifth's disease)	No restriction but pregnant workers are not to care for children with Parvovirus and aplastic crisis or immunosuppressed patients with chronic Parvo infection and anemia.
Pertussis	Restrict until 3 <sup>rd</sup> week after onset of paroxysmal cough or 5 days of appropriate treatment is completed.
Rubella (German measles)	Until 5 days after rash appears.
Scabies or Pediculosis	Until 24 hours after initiation of appropriate treatment.
Shingles (Herpes zoster)	Patient contact is limited to immune patients and lesions are covered.
Tuberculosis	Until receiving appropriate therapy and clinical improvement. The employees physician shall review the case prior to allowing the employee to return to work.
<b>Employees may or may not require work restrictions due to specific acute infections or carrier states.</b>	
Group A Streptococcus or Staphylococcus	No restriction unless clearly associated with disease transmission.
Acute hepatitis B, or HBsAg positive Acute hepatitis C HIV positive or AIDS	Individual evaluation by Employee Health. Work restriction will depend upon the employee's hygiene and preventing his/her blood and other body fluids from contacting others.
Neisseria meningitidis (meningococcus)	No restriction or treatment for carrier state required; for acute meningococcal disease, including meningitis, employees would be too ill to work.
Amebiasis, Salmonella, Campylobacter, Shigella, Cholera, Worms/Parasites Hepatitis A	Food handlers are restricted. In other healthcare providers, evaluation by Employee Health is necessary.

**Note:** in this document the term "patient" is inclusive of patient, resident or client.

**Employees must be evaluated by Employee Health or their private physician regarding their work area if they have certain signs or symptoms of the following conditions:**

Draining abscesses, boils  
 Exudative dermatitis  
 Herpes simplex (whitlow, stomatitis)  
 Uncontrolled respiratory symptoms/infections  
 Impetigo  
 Conjunctivitis

See Workplace Health & Safety

#### 4.2 SUSCEPTIBLE EMPLOYEES

**Exposure of susceptible employees to specific communicable diseases may require restriction from work during the incubation period, for example:**

Chickenpox, Varicella

Incubation period is 10-21 days after exposure; restriction would be from day 8 after first exposure thru day 21 after last exposure (up to 28 days if given VZIG varicella zoster immune globulin) or, if disease develops, until the last crop of vesicles is dried and crusted.

Measles, Rubeola

Incubation period is 7-18 days; restriction would be, as per BCCDC Communicable Disease Manual update March 2010, from day 5 after first exposure to day 21 after last exposure; if disease develops, until 4 days after onset of rash. Live vaccine given to susceptibles within 72 hours of exposure may prevent illness.

Mumps

Incubation period is about 16 to 18 days: restriction would be from 12 until 25 days after exposure; if disease develops, for 9 days after onset of parotid gland swelling, but less if swelling has subsided. Immunization of susceptible persons following exposure is of uncertain value.

Rubella

Incubation period is 14-21 days; restriction would be from day 7 after exposure through day 23; if disease develops, until 4 days after rash appears.

#### 4.3 Occupational Exposure to a Communicable Disease

Infection Control Practitioner will complete the **Communicable Disease Notification Tool** and forward it to the CD Unit and IH Occupational Health.

## 5.0 REFERENCES

- 5.1 **Prevention and Control of Occupational Infections in Healthcare.** Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC); March 2002.
- 5.2 **Guidelines for Infection Control in Healthcare Professionals.** Bolyard EA, Tablan OC, Williams WW, Pearson ML, Shapiro CN, Deithman SD. AJIC (American Journal of Infection Control), vol. 1998;26(3):289-354
- 5.3 **Control of Communicable Diseases Manual.** 19<sup>th</sup> Edition. David L. Heymann (2008).Published American Public Health Association, WA DC
- 5.4 [AV0900 - PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE TO COMMUNICABLE DISEASES](#); IH Administrative Policy Manual – AV Workplace Health and Safety; December 2009.
- 5.5 [BCCDC Communicable Disease Manual.](#)