

Collin College Dental Hygiene Program Policy on Bloodborne Infectious Diseases

For Collin College Dental Hygiene Program Faculty/Staff, Applicants/Students and Patients

Collin College is dedicated to providing access to quality educational programs regardless of disability and within available resources. The College recognizes the serious implications that the spread of communicable disease has on the health, safety and welfare of the student, faculty, staff, and general public. Therefore, the College is committed to ensuring that each employee, applicant/student and patient be provided with a safe and healthy environment. This communicable disease policy is based on current, scientific, and medical information. It is consistent with guidelines issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, and other national/state health related organizations' recommendations. Since scientific information is prone to frequent change, the Dental Hygiene Program will update this policy annually, or as necessary, as new information on infectious diseases becomes available.

Admission, Employment and Patient Treatment

Persons who are seropositive for HIV/AIDS, HBV or other infectious diseases will not be excluded from employment, admissions, patient treatment or access to the institution's services or facilities because of their health status. They will be provided with all reasonable accommodations unless a medically based evaluation determines that exclusion or restriction is necessary for the welfare of the individual, other members of the institution, patients or affiliates (patient care community).

In the instances when a member of the college community has tested HIV positive or been diagnosed with AIDS, the College will consider all obtainable facts, medical information and legal advice in determining the appropriate course of action to take. All situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis considering any recent legislation or health reports. This policy has been developed to provide a fair and equitable method of responding to AIDS within Collin College. *All individuals with HIV/AIDS, HBV or other infectious diseases are expected to seek expert advice concerning their health circumstances and are obligated legally and ethically to conduct themselves in a responsible and safe manner on campus as a protection to the college community.*

The patient consent form contains the following information:

"I understand that my treatment in the Dental Hygiene Clinic at Collin College may expose students and employees to my blood and/or body fluids. If any student or employee is accidentally exposed to my blood/body fluids, I agree to undergo testing for blood pathogens (Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS). I also agree to have the testing agency report the results of my test to the Dental Hygiene Director at Collin College. I realize that the College recognizes the importance of confidentiality and will only release my test results to those persons having need to know. I understand I must seek the services of an approved physician, for testing purposes and will be responsible for all costs incurred from such services."

Confidentiality/Disclosure

The College recognizes the importance of protecting the confidentiality and privacy of any employee/student found to have HIV/AIDS, HBV or other infectious disease. This information will be handled with care and sensitivity and will be kept confidential. The College also has a responsibility to protect employees, students and patients from the harmful acts or conditions of its employees/students. Complete confidentiality will be protected to the highest degree, however may not be guaranteed in such cases that would prevent responsible actions.

A personal physician, in keeping with the current standards, requirements and recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) must routinely assess all students/employees who have a known infectious disease. An evaluation of the individual will include the physician's statement of the individual's susceptibility to infectious diseases often encountered when performing the objective/job skills required for the individual's curriculum.

Communicable Disease Statement

Students who plan to enter the Collin Dental Hygiene Program will be required to read and sign a communicable disease statement and waiver of liability form. This form will become a part of the student's permanent record and will state that the student:

- Has been informed of their risk for exposure to blood and body fluids.
- Understands the potential transmission of bloodborne disease during patient care activities.
- Is financially responsible for any expenses incurred from the testing/treatment following an occupational incident and/or communicable disease exposure.
- Agrees to treat all patients that are assigned regardless of disease state presented by the patient.
- Agrees to undergo testing following an occupational incident or needle stick exposure to bloodborne pathogens.
- Must sign a declination form in the event a student refuses to undergo testing.

Applicants/Students with Infectious Disease

Applicants/students who believe they are at an increased risk of contracting an infectious disease should seek testing and counseling prior to making application to the Dental Hygiene Program. Applicants/students who are HIV/AIDS, or HBV positive will not be barred from working, teaching, attending classes or participating in college sponsored activities unless the applicant/student is unable to follow Standard Precautions. All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Reporting Infectious Status

Any student or employee who knows, or has reasonable basis for believing that he or she is infected with HIV/AIDS, HBV, HCV or other infectious disease which may pose a threat to others, and whose curriculum or job requires performance of patient care procedures which may prove exposed, has an obligation to share that information with Program Director. Disclosure will allow the College to protect the welfare of employees, students and patients from the spread of disease, and we can also respond appropriately to the individuals' health and employment/educational needs.

Students, faculty and staff of Collin College identified as having HIV/AIDS, HBV, or HCV will not be barred from working, teaching, attending classes or participating in college activities unless it is determined that he/she is unable or unwilling to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible and safe manner on campus. All decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Individuals in need of assistance will be referred to counseling services. The individual will receive the college's Bloodborne Policy and, if indicated, the AIDS in the Workplace brochure (<https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/workplace/cdc-hiv-and-aids-and-the-workplace.pdf>) that provides information regarding the availability of further assistance.

Health Records for Students and Employees

Collin College shall comply with any state and federal laws regarding the confidentiality of educational and medical records of students and staff. Health information about a student or employee is personal and confidential and should be treated as such. Records will be maintained in a secure and confidential manner.

Health Requirement

All students who plan to enter a health-related field of study must be able to prove immunity to mumps, measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and varicella zoster, hepatitis B and tuberculosis. Yearly TB testing must be done before students begin Pre-Clinic and again before they begin their second year. The Hepatitis B vaccine must be started upon acceptance to the program with the first injection. The second injection should be given at least one month after the first dose, and the third injection six months after the first dose. A titer needs to be performed following the last series of Hepatitis B vaccine, as recommended by physician.

Additionally, second year students' immunizations must be current and/or updated and copies on file **before** start of clinic.

Provision of Care to Patients with Bloodborne Infectious Disease

Dental hygiene services will be provided to all persons in need. Decisions to provide dental hygiene care will not be made solely on the fact that a person has a bloodborne infectious disease, is HIV seropositive or has AIDS. The skill and knowledge level of the student providers, experience of the student providers, equipment available and concerns about compromise of the patient's health status will be taken into account in decision regarding care of individuals with bloodborne infectious disease. The student **must** consult with the patient's physician to determine if the patient's health status would be significantly compromised by provision of dental treatment.

The patient who has active hepatitis should not be scheduled for dental hygiene care. A consult with the patient's physician to determine the patient's status (non-infectious, infectious, carrier) **must** be performed prior to treatment. Standard precautions should be followed.

Policy: All patients with HIV/AIDS are expected to seek expert advice concerning their health circumstances and are obligated legally and ethically to conduct themselves in a responsible and safe manner on campus as a protection to the college community.

Procedure: Patients in the Dental Hygiene Clinic will be treated following Standard Precautions as outlined by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

It is the responsibility of Collin College's dental hygiene program to make dental health care safe and effective for all patients and to promote the highest standards of infection control. Acceptable means of protecting dental personnel from contracting infectious diseases are available so that all types of treatment can be rendered in a manner that is safe for all patients and providers.

Patients with medical/dental needs beyond the scope available in the dental hygiene clinic will be referred to the proper agency. Patients will be responsible for all cost incurred as a result of referral. No Collin College faculty or dental hygiene student may ethically refuse to treat a patient whose condition is within the dental hygienists' realm of competence, solely because that patient is at risk of contracting, or has, an infectious disease such as HIV, AIDS or Hepatitis B infection. These patients must not be subjected to discrimination.

Training in Infection Control Procedures

No student will be allowed to deliver patient care in any setting until he/she has been instructed in infection control (as per OSHA guidelines), and has mastered material on safety/standard precautions with satisfactory accuracy. Students will be expected to care for patients with health deviations including patients with HIV/AIDS, HBV, HCV, and other bloodborne infectious diseases as part of routine clinical/laboratory curriculum experiences, following mastery of infection control skills and under faculty supervision.

*** The above policy "Dental Hygiene Department Bloodborne Pathogens Policy" will be distributed to clinical patients upon request.**

Airborne Pathogens

OSHA regulations do not currently specify specific employee protections from airborne pathogens in the same manner as the Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens Standard specifies protections against Bloodborne pathogens. Although the risk of transmission of tuberculosis in dental settings is low, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends dental health care personnel (DHCP) include protocols for TB infection control in their offices' written infection control program.

Tuberculosis

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by infection with the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. Infection occurs through inhalation of mycobacteria, which then travels to the alveoli of the lungs. In most people who become infected, the body is able to contain the bacteria and prevent it from multiplying. The bacterium can live in the lungs of an infected person for years, even a lifetime, without the person exhibiting any symptoms. This state is called latent TB infection. A person with latent TB is not infectious to others but the infection can develop into active TB disease in the future and usually exhibits a positive reactive tuberculin skin test. Most people who have latent TB infection never develop active disease. Only people with active disease can spread the infection.

People with latent TB infection

- have no symptoms
- don't feel sick
- can't spread TB to others
- can have a positive tuberculin skin test reaction
- can develop TB disease later in life if they do not receive treatment for latent TB infection

Most people who have latent TB infection never develop active TB, but if they do not receive treatment for latent TB infection, about 10 percent of latent TB infections can develop active disease over a lifetime. This can happen when the person's immune system is weakened allowing the bacteria to become active and cause TB disease (e.g., individuals with HIV, diabetes, certain hematologic disorders such as leukemias and lymphomas, prolonged corticosteroid use, and other conditions). Only a person with active TB can transmit the disease.

People with active TB disease

- have symptoms (e.g., a productive cough, night sweats, fever, weakness or fatigue, weight loss, pain in the chest)
- feel sick
- can spread TB to others
- can have a positive tuberculin skin test reaction

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed [guidelines](#) for preventing transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in health-care settings.¹

Routine Medical History

Ask all patients about past history of TB or exposure to TB. Ask about TB signs and symptoms and medical conditions that increase their risk for TB disease when taking their medical history. A diagnosis of respiratory TB should be considered for any patient with symptoms including coughing for more than 3 weeks, loss of appetite, unexplained weight loss, night sweats, bloody sputum or hemoptysis, hoarseness, fever, fatigue or chest pains.

Dental Treatment and TB

Because a person with latent TB is not infectious, he or she can be treated in the dental office under standard infection control precautions.²

Any patient with symptoms suggestive of active TB disease should be removed from the area of other patients or staff, instructed to wear a surgical or procedure mask, assessed for the urgency of their dental care and promptly referred for medical care. Standard precautions are insufficient to prevent transmission of the bacterium. Elective dental treatment should be deferred until the patient has been declared non-infectious by a physician. Urgent dental care for a person with suspected or active TB should be provided in a facility that has the capacity for airborne infection isolation and has a respiratory protection program in place.

Reference: <https://www.ada.org/resources/ada-library/oral-health-topics/tuberculosis-overview-and-dental-treatment-considerations>

For further information, "Tuberculosis Screening, Testing, and Treatment of U.S. Health Care Personnel: Recommendations from the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association and CDC, 2019" can be found at

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6819a3.htm?s_cid=mm6819a3_w.