

Bloodborne Pathogen Policy

Introduction

The Amarillo College (AC) Dental Hygiene Program is committed to ensuring the safety and health of patients, students, faculty, and staff by addressing issues related to bloodborne pathogens, including Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), Tuberculosis (TB), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). This policy also upholds the rights of individuals with blood-borne infectious diseases.

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

Students are required to treat all assigned clients, which may expose them to bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases during clinical services. Instruction is provided on infectious diseases, disease transmission mechanisms, and infection control procedures to minimize the risk of transmission among patients, operators, and students. Students must adhere to standard precautions and follow OSHA and CDC guidelines during all clinical procedures.

Responsibilities and Assumptions

While the dental hygiene faculty will provide necessary information to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and protect students, they do not assume responsibility for students' personal health. Students are ultimately responsible for preventing self-contamination from infectious diseases.

Safety and Risk Minimization

The AC Dental Hygiene Clinic is a safe environment for providing and receiving dental care. Adhering to appropriate infection control procedures significantly reduces the risk of contracting bloodborne diseases during dental treatments. This policy aims to minimize the risk of transmitting bloodborne pathogens and other environmental hazards in the clinic.

Immunizations

Students are advised to receive the Hepatitis B vaccine before starting clinical work. If a student declines the vaccine, they must sign a "Vaccination Declination Form," taking responsibility for their health. This form will be kept on record for any student who declines vaccination.

Standard Precautions

Standard precautions involve the routine and consistent use of barrier protection, such as gloves, lab coats, masks, and protective eyewear, to prevent skin and mucous membrane exposure to microorganisms from contact with blood or body fluids. Standard precautions must be observed to prevent contact with potentially infectious materials. In cases where differentiating between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids will be treated as potentially infectious.

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

During clinical courses, students exposed to bloodborne pathogens must follow the procedures outlined in the AC Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan, detailed in the Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual.

Communication of Hazardous Materials

Labels and signs must be affixed to containers of regulated waste containing blood or other potentially infectious materials. These labels should be fluorescent orange or orange-red with contrasting lettering or symbols.

Enforcement of Policy

Students engaging in unsafe or careless clinical practices that risk the health of clients, students, or staff will face disciplinary action. This includes a faculty review of the student's actions or behavior, which may result in immediate suspension from the program.

