Immunization Program

Student Manual

2022-2023

Immunization Program

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The Immunization Program

Welcome to your new healthcare program at the University of Manitoba! When students enter into a new field of study in healthcare, it is important for various immunization and screening tests to be reviewed, in keeping with national occupational health recommendations and provincial legislation. Maintaining an up-to-date health record is an important responsibility of being a student and serves to both protect the health of the student, as well as the health of vulnerable patients with whose care the students will be involved. In general, immunizations and health screening tests are voluntary procedures; however, the immunizations and/or testing outlined in these documents are also a condition of enrolment within the student’s chosen program of study. Failure to maintain an up-to-date record may result in the student being barred from clinical activities involving patients and may mean the student cannot complete the program.

The Immunization Program is being offered to students in various disciplines, including: Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, Genetic Counselling, Medicine, Midwifery, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Pathology Assistant, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, and Respiratory Therapy students. The program is designed to offer students high-quality services that will maximize the protection afforded to students and the patients they serve from vaccine-preventable diseases. Immunizations and tests are offered to students in a convenient and safe environment that allows for the enhanced education of both vaccine recipients and those administering vaccinations.

Students who do not want to take part in the school clinics may have required immunizations and testing performed by their own healthcare provider, such as a family physician, nurse, nurse practitioner, or travel health clinic (see page 31 for travel health services information). After completing the online RFHS Immunization Program Overview course in UMLearn, we will ask you to email us to let us know where you plan to have your immunization and testing requirements completed.

Privacy and Protection of Personal Information

The Immunization Program is committed to maintaining the privacy of all students. Records are protected by the Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), and the Protection of Privacy provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). For more information on PHIA please visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html; for more information on FIPPA please visit www.gov.mb.ca/chc/fippa/index.html.

Collection, use, and disclosure: Your personal information and personal health information is being collected under the authority of The University of Manitoba Act. The information you provide will be used by the University for the purpose of determining your ability to participate in patient-related activities during your clinical placements. Your personal information and personal health information may be disclosed to your clinical placement sites to confirm your immunization status. On occasion records may be obtained from, or shared with, certain individuals or organizations as necessary in order to determine a student’s ability to participate in patient-related activities in the student’s current program of study. Immunizations provided by the Immunization Program will be entered into the provincial immunization registry (for those registered with Manitoba Health). Your personal information and personal health information will not be used or disclosed for other

Students have a choice in where they have their immune status information reviewed—please let us know your preference.

Students may choose to have any required immunizations and/or tests performed by the Immunization Program. During clinic appointments scheduled within the school year, clinicians will administer immunizations and tests.
purposes, unless permitted by *The Personal Health Information Act* (PHIA) or *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA).

**Storage and access to records:** Student records are kept locked and are accessible to a limited number of staff of the Immunization Program or your program of study, and only for the stated purposes of the program. One health program does not have access to the records of students enrolled in a different health program. Records that are not related to your program’s requirements (e.g., optional immunizations you wish to receive, or test results for bloodborne pathogens) will not be shared with staff outside of the Immunization Program. Students will receive a copy of their immune status record upon graduation from their program. The immune status record for every student will be kept while the student is enrolled in their program of study, and for 10 years after the student’s expected date of graduation. Eventually the Immunization Program will destroy all immune status record in a secure and confidential manner, consistent with accepted methods of disposal of health records. Students may request a copy of their record at any time while the program has these records.

**Questions:** If you have any questions about the collection of your personal health information, please contact the Immunization Program Office, (204-480-1305); students may also wish to contact the Access & Privacy Office (tel. 204-474-9462), 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB, R3T 2N2.
School Clinics

The following sections provide some additional details regarding the school clinics; more information will be provided in the Immunization Program Orientation UMLearn course.

Format of the Clinics
Students requiring additional immunizations and/or tests will be invited to see a clinician (e.g., physician assistant, nurse, or physician) for an individual assessment. Clinics will be offered at both the Bannatyne and Fort Garry campuses.

At every clinic students will fill out a short health questionnaire asking about their current health status. Students will always see a clinician before being immunized or having a tuberculin skin test administered.

Students Who Feel Unwell at the School Clinics
Students are asked to remain at the clinic for 15 minutes after they receive an immunization or skin test. This is in case the student experiences a severe allergic reaction, or in case the student feels unwell or faints. Students who feel unwell should notify immediately Immunization Program staff. Students who feel unwell will be assessed and provided care as appropriate. Most students who feel unwell recover quickly, and simply need to be observed for a period of time. Policies are in place to respond to students who faint, or students who experience a severe allergic reaction (epinephrine is available and can be administered by a clinician if necessary).

Tips on Attending the School Clinics:
- Please try to attend as close to your scheduled time as possible, in order to reduce waiting and to maintain physical distancing. Students who wait a short amount of time are less likely to feel unwell or faint.
- Please wear a suitable shirt such as a t-shirt that will allow you to expose your entire upper arm (including deltoid/shoulder).
- Students should eat or drink something before the clinic; obtaining a vaccination or skin test on an empty stomach may increase the risk of fainting.
- If we do not have records of immunizations or tests that you claim to have received, we will let you know; please obtain and submit such records in advance of attending an immunization appointment,
- Remain at the clinic 15 minutes in case of an allergic reaction, or fainting episode.
Costs of Vaccines and Services

The following outlines the costs of vaccines and services. Please keep in mind that all required immunizations as well as tuberculin skin tests are provided at no charge for students accessing services through the Immunization Program.

1. Publicly funded vaccines. Some vaccines are publicly funded (paid for by the government) in certain situations. Whether a vaccine is publicly funded may depend on your age, risk factors, and whether you have provincial health insurance with Manitoba. A list of publicly funded vaccines is found at http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/vaccineeligibility.html. For example:
   - Routine tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines are free to Manitoba residents in most situations
   - Hepatitis B vaccine is free to Manitoba residents born in or after 1989, and also to individuals with risk factors such as multiple sexual partners
   - Hepatitis A vaccine is free to Manitoba residents who identify as men who have sex with men (MSM), and those with certain liver diseases

2. Vaccines that are not publicly funded. If a vaccine is not publicly funded, it must be purchased from a pharmacy or clinic. You may receive a discount if your drug plan pays for some or all of the vaccine. However, if your program of study requires a vaccine that normally costs money, you will not be charged for it if you receive it through the school program (see #3 below).

3. Required vaccines. Required vaccines you need to receive as part of your program of study are provided free of charge, for those accessing care through the school clinics. For example, if you need hepatitis B vaccine but did not receive it yet, we will provide it to you for free, regardless of

4. whether or not you would have qualified for publicly funded hepatitis B vaccine. (If you are accessing care from your own provider, you may need to pay for a vaccine if it is not publicly funded)

5. Optional vaccines. Students who request an optional vaccine will be charged the amount charged by the pharmacy for the vaccine and dispensing fee. Students interested in optional vaccines that are not publicly funded may wish to check with their insurance plan(s) regarding coverage. Many students inquire about optional human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine; for some students this series is publicly-funded, and for other students, the vaccine must be purchased.

6. Serology. Some serology (blood antibody) tests are provided free of charge, and some may not be. For example, if you require serology for hepatitis B antibodies, or varicella (chickenpox) antibodies, the laboratory may charge you a flat rate of about $60 for all tests being ordered. However, students who are tested for hepatitis B viral infection, HIV infection, and/or hepatitis C infection, there is no charge for the testing. An exception may be International students with no provincial or territorial health coverage; such students should expect to pay for serologic testing at the lab.

7. Tuberculin skin tests. All tuberculin skin tests (TSTs or Mantoux tests) are provided free of charge for those accessing care through the school clinics. If you obtain a TST through the school clinics but miss a reading without notifying the Immunization Program in advance, you will be charged $30 for the test.

8. Fees charged by primary care providers. Students who choose to access services through their own healthcare provider may be charged fees for having forms completed, or for obtaining vaccinations or tuberculin skin tests.
Obtaining Old Records

It is very important that a student’s previous immunization and testing records be reviewed by the Immunization Program in order to determine a student’s outstanding immunization and testing requirements. In general, proper records (signed and dated by a healthcare provider) are required for proof of immunizations or tests; verbal histories of these are not acceptable. For example, an immunization record should state the following:

- The name of the immunization provided
- The date it was provided
- The name, designation, and signature of the nurse or physician completing the record
- The date the record was completed

Relevant records: All previous immunization records should be submitted. The following immunization records are particularly important:

- Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG)
- Hepatitis B
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)*
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Pertussis (adult)
- Polio
- Tetanus and diphtheria
- Varicella (chickenpox)

As well, students should obtain documentation of any previous tuberculin skin tests (TSTs or Mantoux), chest x-ray reports obtained after a positive TST, and documentation of a previous diagnosis of, or therapy for, latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) or active tuberculosis disease (see pages 25-28).

Other immunization records are less relevant to the program but can still be submitted. Students do not need to provide records for any screening tests that were conducted, such as syphilis, hepatitis C, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Locating records: Records may exist in various locations, including at the office of a student’s former pediatrician or family physician, or a local public health unit. Students may also have immunization papers or pocket cards in their own possession. If immunizations were given but the records are not available, the student should contact the Immunization Program about this.

The provincial immunization registry: Manitoba’s provincial immunization registry (previously known as the “Manitoba Immunization Monitoring System” or MIMS; also called “Panorama”) is an electronic provincial immunization database kept by Manitoba Health; it began as a pilot for some regions in Manitoba in 1981, and was rolled out for all regions in 1984 (some back-entry of old records may also have occurred). All immunizations that are billed by physicians or pharmacist, or offered by Public Health Nurses in schools or clinics, and any other records that are sent to public health by healthcare providers are entered into the provincial immunization registry; all immunizations given by the Immunization Program to students who have a Manitoba Health card will also be sent for entry into the registry. The registry is not 100% complete, as not all healthcare providers will send vaccination records for entry into it. You can have any properly documented immunization records (e.g., out-of-province records) entered into the registry by bringing these to your local public health office; be sure to bring your Manitoba Health card as well. Students or clinicians providing care to students can request a copy of the immunization registry record by contacting the local public health office; for a list of public health offices please refer to: http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/offices.html.

The Immunization Program will obtain an immunization record for every student from the provincial immunization registry, and students do NOT need to do this. However, vaccination records may exist that are not listed on the provincial immunization registry; this includes: records that are from out-of-province; recent travel immunizations that may not have been entered into the registry; or older records (i.e., before the early 1980s). In addition, students may also have records in their possession that are relevant (e.g., immunization pocket cards).
Obtaining Old Records

Additional Tips on Obtaining Records

A "trustee" means a health professional, health care facility, public body, or health services agency that collects or maintains personal health information. Please note the following:

- You can request records from any trustee that still has the records, including a clinic, public health unit, pharmacy, etc.
- If records still exist a trustee is legally obligated to share these with a client within 30 days of a request (this is the law in Manitoba; it may be similar in other jurisdictions). The client's right to obtain records generally remains even if a trustee has retired or died.
- Records should include your name, the date of the service, the item in question, and the name and designation of the clinician.
- Records created by students or their family members generally are not accepted.
- Estimated records are not accepted.
- A trustee cannot insist a client attend in person to pick up records. Your right to obtain your records exists even if you move to a different province or country.
- Trustees are allowed to charge a modest fee for records, which must take into account a client's ability to pay.

In the past, some students have encountered difficulties in exercising their legal right to obtain a copy of their health records. If you encounter any problems, please feel free to contact the Immunization Program for information or assistance.
Exceptions and Contraindications to Immunization and Testing Requirements

Students may be granted a temporary or permanent exemption from a specific immunization or testing requirement due to a medical or health condition. If you feel you need an exemption, please notify the Immunization Program of this; adequate documentation is required for an exemption to be considered. An exemption will fall under one of the following categories:

1. **Allergy:** A student may have a suspected immunoglobulin E (IgE) mediated or other serious allergy to a specific vaccine, vaccine component, or tuberculin, making that item contraindicated for the student (i.e., “should not be given”); adequate documentation from a physician specialist is required.

2. **Compromised immune system:** A student may have a compromised immune system due to the use of immune-suppressing medications, certain infections (e.g., HIV infection), or genetic disorders. In such situations a specific immunization may be contraindicated, and/or a vaccine or test may require special timing relative to medical therapy. Adequate documentation from a physician is required. Special immunization or serological testing requirements that are different from those listed in this document may be recommended for these students. Consultation with physician specialist is recommended in such situations; the Immunization Program can help facilitate consultations as necessary.

3. **Pregnancy:** Live vaccines are contraindicated in pregnancy. Some vaccines are known to be safe during pregnancy, while other vaccines may require a balancing of the benefits versus risks; depending on the risk assessment, a vaccine may be deferred until the student is no longer pregnant. Documenting a self-reported history of pregnancy is considered adequate. For more information on immunization in pregnancy and breastfeeding please refer to the [Canadian Immunization Guide section on Immunization in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding](http://www.canimmunize.ca). Concerns about vaccines and pregnancy can be discussed with the Immunization Program.

4. **Other:** Some vaccines may not be appropriate for an individual due to a specific medical condition or concern; such situations should be addressed on an individual basis.

Parents and Other Immediate Family Members Providing Health Services to Students

Some students have parents or other family members who are trained as nurses, physicians, or other health professions. Students should be aware that in most situations parents or other close family members should not provide a student health services such as immunizations or blood tests.

For example, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba advises its members in its [Code of Ethics](http://www.cpsm.mb.ca/en/): "Limit treatment of yourself or members of your immediate family to minor or emergency services and only when another physician is not readily available; there should be no fee for such treatment."

Other health professions have similar guidelines for their members.

Family members should not complete any medical forms for the student. However, if the student has received any services (e.g., immunizations) from family members in the past relevant to what is now being requested, the Immunization Program may still accept these records.

Chronic Bloodborne Pathogens

Students in all programs must disclose to the Immunization Program if they are known to have human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, and chronic hepatitis B infection. Students in Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, Medicine, and Physician Assistant Studies known to have HIV infection, or chronic hepatitis B or hepatitis C infection are expected to disclose their status to their respective programs.
New students in all programs will be offered optional testing for HIV, hepatitis C, and syphilis, and have the option of receiving testing at any time throughout their studies by contacting the Immunization Program.

**Donating Blood after Receiving an Immunization**

Many students wish to help others through blood donation, and students who qualify as eligible blood donors are strongly encouraged to do this. Canadian Blood Services (CBS) is located at 777 William Avenue, across the street from the Bannatyne campus; both scheduled and walk-in appointments are available.

**Students should be aware that a recent vaccination might result in a temporary deferral period introduced, when an individual will not be able to donate blood.** The deferral period ranges from a few days to several weeks, depending on the type of vaccination given. Students should always mention recent immunizations they have received when donating blood (this is asked on the screening form potential donors complete during their appointment).

For complete donor eligibility criteria or to speak to a trained Canadian Blood Services health professional please call 1-888-2-DONATE (1-888-236-6283), [https://blood.ca](https://blood.ca).
Vaccine Basics

**What are vaccines?**
Vaccines are also called immunizations, needles, or baby shots. Vaccines allow the immune system to learn how to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases. Vaccines not only protect the people who are immunized but may also protect those who cannot be immunized for medical reasons: It is more difficult to maintain a chain of person-to-person infection when large numbers of a population are immune (this is also called “herd-immunity”). Most vaccines are given in childhood, although some vaccines are given at other points in one’s life. For some vaccines, booster (extra) needles are needed to maintain protection against certain diseases, since the protection given by the original immunizations begins to drop over time.

Before vaccines were available, little could be done to prevent serious diseases such as diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus (lockjaw), measles, and polio, to name a few. Now, very few Canadians get sick or die from these diseases because people are protected by immunization. However, in some countries where immunization rates have dropped to low levels, rates of disease can quickly rise. Diseases that are rare in Canada have the potential to once again cause significant suffering and death if we do not continue to immunize individuals against them.

Some vaccines are live, containing living but weakened versions of the organisms they are being used to protect against; examples of this include MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) and varicella (chickenpox). Other vaccinations do not contain living organisms; these include diphtheria, hepatitis A and B, influenza, polio, pertussis, and tetanus.

**What are antibodies?**
Once an individual is exposed to a virus or bacteria, his or her immune system will attempt to create small proteins in the bloodstream called antibodies, in order to fight the infection. If the immune system is successful in creating antibodies, the next time an individual is exposed to the same virus or bacteria, he or she will be more successful in fighting off an infection, as there are now antibodies readily available. The immune system also produces special cells that are able to fight infections. This is the basic concept behind vaccinations: an individual’s immune system is exposed to small particles in the vaccine that mimic the appearance of viruses or bacteria; this trains the immune system to recognize and fight future infections.

For some diseases, antibody levels in the bloodstream can be measured through a blood test. This can be used to determine if the individual is likely protected against a disease, if an exposure were to occur in the future. A common example of this is the antibody level that is checked for healthcare providers after a hepatitis B immunization series (see pages 22-24). However, in most situations it is not necessary to test antibodies after an immunization series is given.

**Are vaccines necessary?**
One of the greatest achievements of public health systems throughout the world is the reduction of infectious diseases resulting from the use of vaccines. Routine immunization has eliminated smallpox from the globe and led to the near elimination of wild poliovirus. The diseases that vaccines prevent are at an all-time low in developed countries, and now few people experience the devastating effects of measles, polio, tetanus, pertussis, and other illnesses. Newer vaccines are being created to further reduce the toll that infectious agents take on human health.

**Are vaccines safe?**
Prior to approval by Health Canada, vaccines are tested extensively to ensure they are effective and safe. Vaccines are the best defense we have against certain infectious diseases; however, no vaccine is 100% safe or effective. Differences in the way individual immune systems react to a vaccine account for rare occasions when people are not protected following immunization or when they experience side effects. Unfortunately, as the incidence of infectious diseases continues to decline, some people have become less interested in the consequences of preventable illnesses. Instead, they have become increasingly concerned about the risks associated with vaccines. Since vaccination is such a common and memorable event, any illness following immunization may be attributed to the vaccine. **While some of these reactions may be caused by the vaccine, many of them are unrelated events that occur after vaccination by coincidence.**
Multiple injections

Is it safe to receive more than one vaccine at the same time? Are there more side effects? One of the most important principles of vaccination administration is that vaccines can almost always be given at the same time. Doing so will not increase the rate of side effects than when each individual vaccine is given alone. In fact, there are increasingly more vaccine manufacturers that are supplying combination vaccines where one needle contains up to five or six vaccines. The body’s immune system is exposed to thousands of antigens every day; giving more than one vaccine at one clinic visit is a very small fraction of the total number daily antigens the body encounters. NOTE: If two live vaccines or a live vaccine and a tuberculin skin test are not given at the same visit, a short period of time must elapse after a live vaccination before any other live vaccines or tuberculin skin tests can be given.

Gaps in vaccine schedules

If it has been a long time since a particular vaccination series was started but not finished, does the series need to be started over? Many vaccinations require multiple doses given over a period of weeks or months, following a set schedule (e.g., hepatitis B; measles/mumps/rubella). If a lengthy period of time has elapsed since starting the series, the series does not need to be restarted, even if it has been years since the previous dose was given. There are minimum time intervals between vaccinations that need to be respected, but there are no maximum time intervals. The only exception to this rule is some situations where oral typhoid vaccine is given.

What are the side effects of vaccinations?

Common side effects (all vaccinations): With any vaccination that is administered, local reactions are common and normal, and may include soreness and redness at the injection site for up to two days. Other reactions can include fever, headache or myalgia (tenderness or pain in the muscles). A few individuals will faint during or after an immunization, or when they are having blood drawn, which is one reason individuals should remain at the clinic 15 minutes after being immunized.

Rare side effects: about one in five hundred thousand vaccinations are associated with a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), manifest by painless swelling about the face and mouth, an itchy rash (90% of cases), and respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and laboured breathing. Individuals should always mention any allergies to their healthcare provider prior to vaccination. Some vaccines have been associated with Guillain-Barré syndrome, which is a form of paralysis that is usually temporary (occurs once in every one million immunizations; this also occurs more commonly in individuals who have not been vaccinated).

Tetanus/diphtheria/pertussis vaccines: These have been noted to cause more local reactions than other vaccines, such as redness, pain, and swelling around the area the vaccine is given; these reactions are not serious, and concern over such side effects should not lead to a delay in receiving this immunization (see page 11).

MMR: Within three weeks after immunization a red rash occurs in less than five per cent of people receiving live MMR vaccine who are not immune to measles or rubella; sometimes the rash can cover the whole body. The rash disappears by itself and is NOT passed on to other people. Temporary swelling of lymph glands, especially those of the head and neck, occurs in about five to 15 per cent of people who are not immune to rubella. Temporary joint pain or swelling lasting one to three weeks may occur after receiving rubella vaccine; this is most common in post-pubertal females. There is no evidence this leads to chronic arthritic or neurologic conditions.

Chickenpox: Some people will get a rash that looks like chickenpox one to four weeks after getting the live chickenpox vaccine, usually with fewer than 50 spots or blisters. The fluid in the blisters MAY be contagious, although transmission of the disease from a vaccine rash is very rare. The rash should be covered if possible and contact with people who have not had chickenpox or those with weakened immune systems should be minimized or avoided.

Pregnancy

Some vaccines (e.g., influenza) are approved for use in pregnancy, while others are not; this is due to the theoretical risk some vaccinations may pose to pregnant people. People should always advise their healthcare provider if they are pregnant before receiving a vaccination. Pregnant people should not receive a live vaccine (e.g., MMR; varicella) they should avoid pregnancy for one month after receiving these vaccines.
Tetanus

What is tetanus?
Tetanus is a rapid and often fatal disease caused by an extremely potent neurotoxin (nerve toxin) produced by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*. The organism is found in soil, the intestines of animals and humans, and also the dust inside buildings. Wounds that are contaminated with soil or feces (stool) and that are associated with deep tissue injury are most frequently associated with tetanus; cases have also been reported related to injection drug use, animal bites/lacerations, burns, or surgery. Once inside the body, the tetanus bacteria produce a neurotoxin that causes prolonged, painful contraction of muscles; usually starting in the jaw (“lockjaw”, causing difficulty with opening the mouth or swallowing), and then progressing to other areas of the body. Death occurs in over 10% of cases.

How can tetanus be spread?
Exposure occurs when tetanus bacteria from the environment gain entry into the body, usually through an open wound; about a third of cases occur without a known injury. Tetanus is not spread person-to-person.

Canada
Prior to vaccination, there were about 40 to 50 deaths from tetanus each year in Canada. From 2000 to 2011 there were between 1 and 8 cases of tetanus in Canada each year, with 6 deaths since 2000. Cases occur almost exclusively among individuals who are under-immunized or with uncertain immunization histories.

How can tetanus be prevented?
Most cases of tetanus can be prevented through immunization. All individuals should receive a primary (childhood) series of vaccinations with tetanus vaccine. Adults with an unclear or absent history of vaccination should also be given a primary series. A booster dose of tetanus vaccine should then be given every ten years (in Canada tetanus vaccine comes combined with diphtheria vaccine). Sometimes special wound treatment may be required after an injury, depending on the level of contamination of the wound and the immunization status of the individual. Precautions should always be exercised when individuals handle soil or animal feces, for example, gloves should always be worn while gardening. All injuries to skin should be thoroughly cleaned.

After a tetanus/diphtheria immunization is given, when is the next dose of tetanus/diphtheria due?
After a tetanus/diphtheria (Td) or tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) immunization is given in adulthood to individuals with a primary series, another routine Td immunization is due in 10 years. However, if a fully immunized adult sustains a wound that is serious and/or dirty, and it has been more than five years since the last dose of a tetanus-containing vaccine was given, then another dose of Td should be given.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Although there is no risk of spread of tetanus person-to-person, healthcare workers are at risk of tetanus, and should take the appropriate control measures for management of wounds.

Tetanus and Diphtheria Immunization Requirement:
All students are required to have documented a complete primary series of tetanus/diphtheria immunizations. This requires a minimum of three doses, with ideally a minimum of two months (absolute minimum one month) between the first two doses, and a minimum of six months between the last two doses. In addition, the last tetanus/diphtheria containing immunization must have been received within the past ten years. Serology is not accepted as proof of tetanus and diphtheria immunity. Students who do not have a primary series documented must complete a primary adult immunization series. Documentation indicating that a childhood series was received without specific dates provided is not sufficient.

Booster dose: A booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria (Td) containing vaccine is required every 10 years, with one of these doses being given in adulthood as the combined tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine (see page 14 for more information on the pertussis immunization requirements).
What is diphtheria?
Diphtheria is a communicable disease caused by certain toxin-producing strains of the bacterium *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. Infection can occur in the respiratory tract (lungs and connecting airways) and/or skin. One characteristic sign of diphtheria is an adherent, grey membrane that forms over the mucous membrane of the tonsils or throat; attempts to remove the membrane can cause bleeding. Large membranes may cause life-threatening airway obstruction. The diphtheria organisms can produce a toxin, which damages the heart and central nervous system. About 5% to 10% of those with diphtheria of the respiratory system will die; most at risk are the very young and the elderly. About 3% to 5% of healthy persons with no symptoms may have diphtheria bacteria living on the skin or in the nose and throat.

How can diphtheria be spread?
Diphtheria is spread by person-to-person transmission through respiratory secretions, and physical contact with skin lesions infected with diphtheria bacteria.

Canada
Prior to universal diphtheria vaccination there were thousands of cases of diphtheria in Canada each year, now there are between zero to five positive diphtheria cultures reported annually. Occasionally imported cases of diphtheria are reported.

How can diphtheria be prevented?
Diphtheria can usually be prevented through vaccination. All individuals should receive a primary (childhood) series of vaccination with diphtheria vaccine. Adults with an unclear or absent history of vaccination should also be given a primary series. A booster dose of diphtheria vaccine should then be given every ten years (in Canada diphtheria vaccine comes combined with tetanus vaccine). Studies of healthy adult populations in Canada indicate that approximately 20% of adults (higher in some age groups) do not have protective levels of antibody to diphtheria. Infection can occur in immunized persons, however, disease is most common and most severe in those not immunized, or just partially immunized. Taking precautions to minimize contact with respiratory secretions or skin lesions is also important in limiting the spread of diphtheria, and many other infections.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
If diphtheria protection is not maintained through immunization and infection control precautions, there is a potential for disease reemergence. Healthcare workers are in a unique position to be affected by diphtheria themselves, and to spread the disease to vulnerable patients.

Tetanus and Diphtheria Immunization Requirement: All students are required to have documented a complete primary series of tetanus/diphtheria immunizations. This requires a minimum of three doses, with ideally a minimum of two months (absolute minimum one month) between the first two doses, and a minimum of six months between the last two doses. In addition, the last tetanus/diphtheria containing immunization must have been received within the past ten years. Serology is not accepted as proof of tetanus and diphtheria immunity. Students who do not have a primary series documented must complete a primary adult immunization series. Documentation indicating that a childhood series was received without specific dates provided is not sufficient.

Booster dose: A booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria (Td) containing vaccine is required every 10 years, with one of these doses being given in adulthood as the combined tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine (see page 14 for more information on the pertussis immunization requirements).
Polio

What is poliomyelitis (polio)?
Polio is a very contagious infection caused by the poliovirus. Over 90% of polio infections produce no symptoms or mild symptoms. Some individuals however will experience a severe infection with lasting complications. Symptoms of polio infection begin with minor fever, headache, and vomiting. The virus can attack the cells surrounding nerve cells in the spinal column or the brain stem, causing damage to these nerves and associated muscles. Individuals so affected may experience a major illness with severe muscle pain and stiffness of the neck and back. In less than 1% of infections paralysis of muscles at one or more parts of the body may occur; the paralysis is usually asymmetric (e.g., one arm affected more than the other, or one leg affected more than the other). Paralysis of the muscles of the lungs or the throat can be life threatening.

How can polio be spread?
Polio is spread person-to-person through the “fecal-oral route” or through the “oral-oral route”; infection usually occurs when secretions from an infected person’s mouth or the person’s feces are passed into another person’s body through the mouth. The virus is extremely stable and can remain viable in the environment for long periods of time.

Canada
There have been no wild cases (i.e., local spread of natural disease) of polio in Canada since 1977. Cases of poliomyelitis occurring in Canada and the United States are attributable to importation by tourists and immigrants, and to vaccine-associated strains (see OPV and IPV discussed below). Polio has almost been eradicated in most parts of the world, but it continues to be a serious threat in certain countries, particularly parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

How can polio be prevented?
Polio can be prevented through vaccination. It is important for all children to receive a primary immunization series against poliovirus. Immunization with polio vaccine is also recommended for previously unimmunized adults; this is particularly important for adults who may be exposed to wild polioviruses. These include: travellers to countries where these viruses are circulating; residents of communities in which a visitor or new refugee/immigrant may be excreting the viruses; health care workers (see below); laboratory workers handling specimens that may contain the viruses.

What is the difference between OPV and IPV?
In the past oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV), a live vaccine, was used for polio immunization. While this was a highly efficient and effective vaccination, it caused paralytic polio disease in about one out of two million vaccine recipients. Canada has since switched to the exclusive use of inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV), which is not a live vaccine and which cannot cause polio disease. (Note: both OPV and IPV can be counted as valid doses when previous polio records are reviewed).

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Healthcare workers may be at higher risk of being infected by polio because they are more likely to be in close contact with individuals who may be excreting poliovirus.

Polio Immunization Requirement
All students are required to have documented a complete primary series of polio immunizations. This requires a minimum of three doses, with a minimum of one month between the first two doses, and a minimum of six months between the last two doses. Serology is not accepted as proof of polio immunity. Students who do not have a primary series documented must complete a primary adult immunization series. Records indicating that a childhood series was received without providing dates are insufficient.

Booster dose: Adult booster doses of polio vaccine are generally not required for healthcare workers who have received a complete primary series, unless they are traveling to high-risk areas of the world (e.g., work or vacation in a polio-endemic country).
Pertussis Immunization Requirement

All students are required to have single adult dose of tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) vaccine on or after 18 years of age. This is regardless of: when the last dose of tetanus/diphtheria was given; when the next dose of Tdap was already given in adolescence. This dose can also be given as combined Tdap-Polio vaccine, if a dose of polio is also indicated.
Measles

What is measles?
Measles (also called rubeola or red measles) is a highly contagious disease caused by the measles virus. Infection occurs when someone comes into contact with droplets or air contaminated with the virus. Symptoms of measles include fever, cough, runny nose, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and a characteristic red blotchy rash; these symptoms usually last one to two weeks. Complications can include diarrhea, ear infection, pneumonia, encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), seizures, coma, and death. Measles is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable deaths in children worldwide.

How is measles spread?
Measles virus is transmitted person-to-person by direct contact with an individual’s infectious nose and throat droplets; less commonly, measles can be spread by the airborne route, i.e., carried through the air when an individual coughs or sneezes.

Canada and Manitoba
Despite a dramatic drop in the number of cases of measles reported after the widespread use of measles vaccine, Canada continues to see sporadic activity. The majority of cases are the result of international travellers arriving in Canada with measles, or as a result of limited spread following imported cases. In 2017 there were 73,000 measles deaths globally. Between 2005 and 2011 the number of measles cases in Canada ranged from 6 to 750 cases each year. In 2018 there was 29 cases of measles in Canada. Due to declining immunization rates the global number of measles cases and deaths from measles increased from 2017 to 2019.

How can measles be prevented?
The best way of preventing the spread of measles in the world is through an effective vaccination program. In Canada, children now routinely get two doses of the vaccine MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) to prevent infection (the two-dose vaccine schedule was introduced around 1996-97). As measles outbreaks were so common in the past, the majority of individuals born prior to 1970 are considered immune to measles. Adults born in 1970 or later should ensure that they have received at least one dose of measles vaccine. Some higher-risk adults (e.g., healthcare workers; military recruits; university students and those traveling to measles-endemic areas of the world born in or after 1970) need two doses of measles vaccine for immunity.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Susceptible healthcare workers are capable of developing measles infection from patients afflicted by the infection; workers are also at higher risk of spreading the disease to vulnerable patients. Young healthcare workers such as students are at particular risk because many were born on or after 1970 and are therefore too young to have any degree of immunity from natural measles infection.

Measles Requirement
One of the following criteria is required for evidence of measles immunity:

- a. Documented evidence of immunization with TWO doses of measles-containing vaccine, given at least a month apart, starting on or after the first birthday; OR
- b. Serology showing antibodies to measles (IgG blood antibody); OR
- c. Laboratory documentation of measles infection (e.g., virus culture); laboratory report required.

In most situations immunization to measles is strongly preferred over serological testing, but either is acceptable. Serology is not required if measles immunization requirements have been met. If two valid doses of measles vaccine have been documented, negative post-immunization serology can be ignored.
Mumps

What is mumps?
Mumps is an infectious disease caused by the mumps virus. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle ache, and swelling and tenderness of the parotid glands at the angle of the jaw (parotitis). Half of infections present with mild symptoms, or no symptoms at all. Less commonly mumps infection can lead to inflammation of the testicles (orchitis; 25% of cases in adolescents or adults) or ovaries (oophoritis; 5% of cases), inflammation of the pancreas, inflammation of the meninges surrounding the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), and temporary or permanent hearing loss. Although very rare, if meningitis is severe mumps can prove fatal.

How is mumps spread?
Infection with the mumps virus occurs through direct contact with respiratory droplets from the nose or throat, coughing, sneezing, sharing drinks, kissing, or from contact with surfaces that have been contaminated with the mumps virus.

Canada
Prior to routine vaccination in 1969 there were about 34,000 cases of mumps in Canada each year; after universal mumps vaccinations were introduced numbers dropped more than 99%. From September 2016 to November 2018 there have been 2,175 confirmed cases of mumps reported in Manitoba as part of a large province-wide outbreak of the disease.

How can mumps be prevented?
The most effective way of preventing mumps infection is through immunization. Originally, a single dose of mumps vaccine was recommended for all children as part of their routine immunization schedule. Children began to receive two doses of mumps when a second dose of MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine was introduced in 1996; the second dose was intended for enhanced measles protection. Due to a large Canadian mumps outbreak, recommendations around mumps vaccination for healthcare workers have changed (listed below).

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Susceptible healthcare workers are capable of developing mumps infection from patients afflicted by the infection; workers are also at higher risk of spreading the disease to vulnerable patients. Young healthcare workers such as students are at particular risk because (1) many were born in or after 1970 and are therefore too young to have any degree of immunity from natural mumps infection; (2) healthcare students will spend a great deal of time around vulnerable patients; and (3) young university students are known to be at particularly high risk for mumps, as seen in several Canadian mumps outbreaks.

Mumps Requirement
One of the following criteria is required for evidence of mumps immunity:

a. Documented evidence of immunization with TWO doses of mumps-containing vaccine, given at least a month apart, starting on or after the first birthday; OR
b. Serology showing antibodies to mumps (IgG blood antibody); OR
c. Laboratory documentation of mumps infection (e.g., virus culture); laboratory report required.

In most situations mumps immunization is strongly preferred over serological testing, but either is acceptable. Serology is not required if mumps immunization requirements have been met. If two valid doses of mumps vaccine have been documented, negative post-immunization serology can be ignored.
Rubella

What is rubella?
Rubella is an infection caused by the rubella virus, which is usually a mild illness that can occur in adults and children. It begins with a rash that starts out with red spots on the face, which spreads downwards to cover the entire body. Other symptoms include fever, sore throat, eye irritation, painful joints and tender swelling of the lymph nodes located behind the ear and at the back of the head. Children usually have few or no symptoms, but adults may have a more severe illness; 70% of adolescent and adult females with rubella develop pain and swelling of large joints. About 20% to 50% of those who acquire rubella infection have no symptoms, and yet can still transmit the infection to others. Although rubella is generally a mild illness, if contracted in the early months of pregnancy it is associated with a high rate of fetal loss or a constellation of birth defects known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). The most common features of CRS are deafness, blindness, and heart and brain defects. Symptoms of CRS may be obvious at birth or develop later in life. Diabetes mellitus is a recognized late complication of CRS. Between 1986 and 1995, thirty cases of CRS were reported in Canada.

How is rubella spread?
Rubella is acquired by direct contact with the secretions from the nose or mouth of an infected person. It can also be acquired by directly inhaling droplets discharged from infected people when they cough or sneeze. In CRS, the virus is transmitted from an infected pregnant person across the placenta to the fetus during pregnancy.

Canada and Manitoba
After universal rubella vaccination was introduced in Canada in 1983, the average number of rubella cases reported decreased from approximately 5,300 (1971-1982) to fewer than 30 cases per year (1998-2004). Outbreaks of rubella used to occur fairly frequently, including one in Manitoba in 1997 (3,900 cases, mainly among males who were not immunized prior to 1983). In Manitoba there was one case of rubella in 2007 and two cases in 2009. One case of CRS was reported in Canada in 2018.

How can rubella be prevented?
The most effective way of preventing mumps infection is through immunization. In Canada, routine infant immunization programs have resulted in sustained high rates of rubella immunity in the general population.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Susceptible healthcare workers are capable of acquiring rubella infection from patients afflicted by the infection; workers are also at higher risk of spreading the disease to vulnerable patients, particularly pregnant people.

Rubella Requirement
One of the following criteria is required for evidence of rubella immunity:

a. Documented evidence of immunization with ONE dose of rubella-containing vaccine, given on or after the first birthday; OR
b. Serology showing antibodies to rubella (IgG blood antibody); OR
c. Laboratory documentation of rubella infection (e.g., virus culture); laboratory report required.

In most situations rubella immunization is strongly preferred over serological testing, but either is acceptable. Serology is not required if rubella immunization requirements have been met. If one valid dose of rubella vaccine has been documented, negative post-immunization serology can be ignored.
Figure 1: Tetanus. The 1809 depiction by Sir Charles Bell of the agonizing condition of opisthotonus from tetanus. A nerve toxin from the *Clostridium tetani* bacterium produces prolonged, painful contraction of muscles; usually starting in the jaw (“lockjaw”), and then progressing to other areas of the body (see page 11).

Figure 2: Diphtheria. One characteristic sign of diphtheria is an adherent, grey membrane that forms over the mucous membrane of the tonsils or throat; attempts to remove the membrane can cause bleeding. Large membranes may cause life-threatening airway obstruction (see page 12).

Figure 3: Polio. The poliomyelitis virus can destroy nerves, leading to muscle weakness, atrophy (shrinking) of muscles, and paralysis (see page 13).

Figure 4: Pertussis (whooping cough). A respiratory infection caused by *Bordetella pertussis*, characterized by sudden, severe spasms of coughing and sometimes vomiting; severity is greatest among young children, who can sometimes die from the disease (see page 14).

Figure 5: Measles. A highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the measles virus; infection results in a rash (shown), which may be accompanied by diarrhea, ear infections, pneumonia, encephalitis (brain inflammation), seizures, and death; measles kills 73 000 children in the world each year (see page 15).

Figure 6: Mumps. The mumps virus can cause characteristic parotitis (parotid gland inflammation, shown). Orchitis (inflammation of the testicles) and oophoritis (inflammation of the ovaries) may also occur, although permanent sterilization is rare. Other rare complications include viral meningitis and deafness (see page 16).
Figure 7: Rubella. While usually a mild illness, if the rubella virus is contracted in the early months of pregnancy it is associated with a high rate of fetal loss, or a constellation of birth defects known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS). Shown here are congenital cataracts in a child born with CRS (see page 17).

Figure 8: Hepatitis B. The hepatitis B virus attacks the liver and can cause jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin), abdominal pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and even liver cancer (pictured); about 30% of infections occur without symptoms (see page 22).

Figure 9: Varicella (chickenpox). Infection with the varicella zoster virus (VZV) causes fever and a very characteristic itchy rash with blister-like lesions, covering the body but usually more concentrated on the face, scalp, and trunk (see page 20).

Figure 11: Tuberculin skin test (TST or Mantoux). A TST is used to determine whether a person is infected with *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes tuberculosis disease. A small amount of tuberculin is injected just under the skin of the forearm, producing a pale elevation of the skin (a wheal) 6 to 10 mm in diameter. The area is assessed 2-3 days later; a firm swelling or bump under the skin (induration) may indicate infection is present (see pages 25-27).

Figure 12: Influenza. The influenza virus is spread when a person who has influenza coughs, sneezes, or speaks, and sends influenza virus into the air, allowing others to inhale the virus. Each year in Canada there are thousands of deaths, and tens of thousands of hospitalizations due to influenza (see pages 29-30).
Varicella (Chickenpox)

What is chickenpox?
Chickenpox (also known as varicella) is an infection caused by a virus. The virus causes an itchy rash that turns into small, fluid-filled blisters. Sometimes a person may also have a fever and headache before or during the rash. Some people have only a few blisters; others can have many blisters over their entire body. While most people recover from chickenpox without lasting effects, some children and adults will suffer severe complications. These complications include: infection of the skin or organs; pneumonia; bleeding problems; inflammation of the liver, kidney, lining around the spinal cord (meningitis) or the brain (encephalitis). Prior to universal vaccination about 90% of all children acquired chickenpox before they reach 12 years of age. Most individuals will only get chickenpox once.

How can chickenpox be spread?
Chickenpox is one of the most contagious infections; the virus spreads easily through the air through coughing and sneezing, as well as direct contact with infected saliva or blister fluid.

What is shingles, or zoster?
After a person gets chickenpox, the virus stays in the body in an inactive form. It can become active again later causing shingles (zoster), a rash appearing on usually one isolated area of the body that can cause severe pain, sometimes lasting as long as six months. The rash is even more serious if it occurs on the face or near the eyes. In persons with weakened immune systems, shingles can sometimes spread throughout the entire body. Up to 30% of individuals who have been infected with chickenpox will get shingles. Shingles tends to occur in older individuals and those with a weakened immune system.

Canada and Manitoba
In the pre-vaccine era, it is estimated that in Canada there were approximately 350,000 varicella cases and 1,500 to 2,000 varicella-related hospitalizations each year. Since the introduction of varicella immunization as part of the childhood immunization series, these numbers have dropped substantially. Since 2004, the annual average number of varicella hospitalizations at Immunization Monitoring Program ACTive (IMPACT) centers has dropped from 300 (2000 to 2004) to 114 (2005 to 2009). Between 2000 and 2009, a total of 10 pediatric deaths due to varicella were reported by the (IMPACT) system, with a range of 0-3 deaths per year.

Can chickenpox be prevented?
Varicella vaccine decreases the chance of getting chickenpox infection by between 70 and 90%, and substantially decreases the likelihood of severe illness. In Canada, all children are being offered varicella vaccine on or after the first birthday, with a booster dose at age five to six years. Older children and adults who have already had chickenpox do not need to get vaccinated.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Students who are not immune to chickenpox may get infected, and then transmit the virus to others in healthcare settings who are also not immune. This may include pediatric patients, and patients with weakened immune systems, who may suffer severe complications from infection. If a non-immune pregnant person gets chickenpox, their baby may be born with birth defects. These include eye problems, scarring, or shortening of the arms and legs. If the pregnant person has chickenpox around the time the baby is born, the newborn can suffer severe infection.

Varicella Requirement
One of the following criteria is required for evidence of varicella immunity:

a. Documented evidence of immunization with TWO doses of varicella-containing vaccine, given at least a month apart, starting on or after the first birthday; OR
b. Serology showing antibodies to varicella (IgG blood antibody); OR
c. Laboratory documentation of varicella infection (e.g., virus culture); laboratory report required.

A history of varicella infection is not acceptable proof of immunity. Students without documented varicella immunizations should have a varicella serology blood test performed before receiving chickenpox vaccine; most of these students will already be immune, making immunization unnecessary. Serology is not required if varicella immunization requirements have been met. If two valid doses of varicella vaccine have been documented, negative post-immunization serology can be ignored.
Hepatitis A

NOTE: Every year students ask about hepatitis A vaccination. Students should be aware that hepatitis A vaccination is neither required nor recommended for the majority of healthcare workers for work conducted within Canada at this time.

The Immunization Program requires students to be immunized against hepatitis B, not hepatitis A; hepatitis B vaccine is provided free of charge to students. However, if a student desires protection against hepatitis A for other reasons, the student may wish to receive a hepatitis A series. This can be given as either plain hepatitis A vaccine (two doses of vaccine, with the second dose given six or more months after the first), or combined with other antigens (e.g., hepatitis A and B vaccine, brandname "Twinrix", usually administered using a 3-dose series). Students who are unsure if they wish to receive hepatitis A vaccinations can always be immunized against hepatitis A at a later date, through their primary care provider or local travel health clinic. Hepatitis A vaccine or hepatitis A and B combined vaccine are not covered by the Immunization Program for most students; students interested in receiving these vaccines will need to purchase them from the pharmacy; they can be administered by the Immunization Program clinician.

What is hepatitis A?
Hepatitis A is an infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms of hepatitis A infection include fever, loss of appetite, nausea, fatigue, stomach pain, dark urine and a yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). Hepatitis A can be a serious and even fatal infection for the elderly or those with immune system problems. However, the vast majority of people with hepatitis A infection recover from their symptoms in 4 to 6 weeks. Unlike hepatitis B and C, hepatitis A infection is always temporary, and none of those infected will permanently carry the virus.

How can hepatitis A be spread?
Hepatitis A is spread person-to-person through the "fecal-oral route", which can occur from direct person-to-person contact, from contamination of the environment or objects, or through contaminated food or water. The hepatitis A virus is very stable and can live outside the human body for days or even weeks and still be capable of causing infection.

Canada and Manitoba
In Canada there were 246 cases of hepatitis A in 2012. There are usually fewer than 20 cases occurring in Manitoba each year. Given the under-diagnosis and under-reporting of hepatitis A and the occurrence of subclinical infections, the actual number of cases is estimated to be several times higher than reported. Many cases are associated with a return from foreign travel, particularly in individuals who never received hepatitis A vaccine.

Can hepatitis A be prevented?
Hepatitis A is preventable through immunization with hepatitis A vaccine, which is at least 90% to 97% effective in preventing clinical hepatitis A illness. Hepatitis A vaccine can be given combined with hepatitis B vaccine (hepatitis A+B, brand name "Twinrix"), combined with typhoid vaccine, or alone as plain hepatitis A vaccine. Hepatitis A vaccine can be obtained through the school clinics, primary care providers, travel health clinics, and many pharmacies. For men who have sex with men, those with chronic liver disease, and those with certain other high-risk groups, vaccine is available at no cost to the client.

Why is this important to a healthcare worker?
Most healthcare workers practicing in Canada do not need to get vaccinated to protect themselves or the patients whom they serve. However, there are some remote northern communities where hepatitis A is more common, and vaccination could be considered for those working in these communities. Vaccination should be considered for those providing healthcare in foreign countries where hepatitis A is endemic. Anyone traveling to such a foreign country for business or pleasure should also consider getting immunized against hepatitis A.
What is hepatitis B?
Hepatitis B is a serious infection of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV). The virus is spread by direct exposure to the blood or body fluids of those infected with HBV. Symptoms appear usually about three months after infection occurs, and include loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, stomach pain, fatigue, and a yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). About 30% of infected adults will have few or no symptoms. It is possible after infection to completely clear the virus, and develop life-long immunity. However some people infected with HBV, especially infants and children, never completely recover and carry the virus in their blood for the rest of their lives; people who permanently carry the virus remain infectious to others. In some of these people there will be persistent inflammation of the liver and possibly cirrhosis (scarring and hardening) of the liver, liver failure and liver cancer. HBV causes 80% of all primary liver cancers worldwide.

How can hepatitis B be spread?
HBV is spread through exposure to the blood or body fluids of those infected with the virus. This includes: sexual contact with an infected person; sharing of drug injection equipment; transmission from an infected pregnant person to their infant at the time of birth; or exposure to blood in the workplace. Almost one-third of infections have no identified risk factors.

Canada and Manitoba
Canada has low rates of hepatitis B infection; almost 5% of the population shows serological (blood) evidence of previous infection, and less than 1% are chronic HBV carriers. About 10% of those immigrating to Canada are HBV chronic carriers. In Manitoba in 2016 there were 276 new cases of hepatitis B. Manitoba is currently experiencing an outbreak of hepatitis B, particularly among Winnipeg males with a history of injection drug use and/or incarceration.

Can hepatitis B be prevented?
Hepatitis B infection is preventable through immunization. Universal immunization to hepatitis B is offered in all provinces and territories (in Manitoba, this started for grade 4 students in 1998). Hepatitis B vaccine is also recommended for certain groups at higher risk of infection with hepatitis B. Other steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of infection with HBV include: universal precautions for healthcare workers when handling specimens potentially contaminated with HBV (e.g., needles); safer sexual practices (e.g., using latex condoms); not sharing household articles that may be contaminated with blood (e.g., toothbrushes, razors); for those who use injection drugs, not sharing injection equipment; screening all pregnant people for infection, and providing prophylaxis to newborns at birth.

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Handling potentially infected blood and body fluids or contaminated sharp equipment is a risk of healthcare. Occupational transmission of hepatitis B used to happen more frequently but has become significantly less common since the advent of hepatitis B immunization and infection control precautions. Healthcare workers are capable of both acquiring HBV through their work, and of passing on HBV to patients.

Hepatitis B Requirements

Assessment for hepatitis B infection: Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) is a test for current hepatitis B infection. This test is required for all students, including those who are believed to be already immune to hepatitis B. The test must be conducted after the primary hepatitis B immunization series has been completed. The test should be conducted 28 or more days after a hepatitis B immunization to avoid the possibility of a false-positive HBsAg result (vaccine can produce a false-positive HBsAg result).

Assessment for hepatitis B immunity: Students will fall into one of the following three categories:

(1) Immune to hepatitis B (most students are in this category): Documentation of a complete hepatitis B immunization series is required (see definition of a complete series below). A test for immunity, hepatitis B surface antibody (anti-HBs) should be performed one or more months (ideally 1-2 months) after the last dose of the series. If the post-immunization anti-HBs is positive (≥10 mIU/mL), no further hepatitis B immunizations or anti-HBs tests are required. If anti-HBs is negative, additional doses of vaccine and antibody tests are required (see algorithm on page 24).
Hepatitis B

Please note the following:

**Complete hepatitis B series:** there are multiple different acceptable hepatitis B series available, including 2-dose, 3-dose, and 4-dose series. Whether a series is complete depends on the type of vaccine used, the age of the recipient, the number of doses used and the spacing between doses. For a complete list please see table 3 in the Hepatitis B section of the Canadian Immunization Guide. For adults starting a series, a three-dose series should be selected, with doses given at time 0, 1, and 6 months; this can either be plain hepatitis B vaccine, or the combined hepatitis A and B vaccine. Students who have had a complete two-dose series will require a third dose of vaccine.

**Previous doses:** Any previous documented doses of hepatitis B vaccine count towards the total number of doses in the series; the vaccination series does not need to be re-started. The final dose(s) of the series should be completed, regardless of how long ago the initial dose(s) were given, as long as the minimal intervals between doses are respected. Vaccines produced by different manufacturers can be used interchangeably, provided that the age-appropriate dosages are used.

**Positive serology without documented immunizations:** Positive serology (anti-HBs ≥10 mIU/mL) will not be accepted if there is an incomplete or absent record of immunization. This is because positive serology proves long-term immunity only in those with a complete, documented hepatitis B immunization series. An exception to this: students immune due to presumed natural immunity, i.e., positive anti-HBs AND positive anti-HBc (hepatitis B core antibody), are considered immune and do not require documented hepatitis B immunizations.

Please see the *Hepatitis B Immunization and Testing Algorithm (page 24)* for a recommended approach to hepatitis B immunizations and testing for healthcare workers.

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(2) **Vaccine non-responders:** This means a student has received *two complete, documented* hepatitis B immunization series, and post-immunization serology 1-6 months after the final dose has not demonstrated immunity. In this situation generally no further hepatitis B immunizations or serological testing are required. In the event of a possible exposure to hepatitis B (e.g., a needlestick injury, human bite, mucosal splash) the student may need passive immunization with hepatitis B immune globulin (a human blood product) as soon as possible, and then again one month later.

(3) **Immune due to natural infection:** Students with positive anti-HBs AND positive anti-HBc (hepatitis B core antibody), are considered immune due to presumed natural infection and do not require documented hepatitis B immunizations. Testing for natural immunity is not necessary for most students, but can be considered if a student comes from a background with a high likelihood of previous hepatitis B infection (e.g., countries with high rates of endemic hepatitis B infection).

(4) **Hepatitis B infection:** Students with chronic hepatitis B infection (*positive HBsAg*) do not require any additional hepatitis B immunizations. Such student must consult with the Immunization Program regarding their status. A referral to a specialist will be discussed if such has not already occurred, and career counselling may be indicated for some students.
Hepatitis B Immunization and Testing Algorithm

1. Complete all doses of a hepatitis B immunization series.

2. Test serology for anti-HBs, HBsAg.

   - anti-HBs $\geq 10$ IU/L?
     - Yes: How long since last dose given?
       - Greater than 6 mo: Offer single booster then test serology for anti-HBs, HBsAg 1-6 months after.
       - No: Offer two more doses to complete a second HBV immunization series.
     - No: Offer a second complete, 3-dose series.

3. Test serology for anti-HBs, HBsAg 1-6 months after last dose of vaccine.

   - anti-HBs $\geq 10$ IU/L?
     - Yes: Immune, no further doses or testing.
     - No: Vaccine non-responder, no further doses or testing. Advise of need for passive antibodies post-exposure.
Tuberculosis and TSTs

What is the difference between tuberculosis infection and tuberculosis disease?

Latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) occurs when an individual has been infected with tuberculosis bacteria and now has latent (sleeping) bacteria inside the lungs. The individual has no symptoms because of this infection and cannot transmit the bacteria to others; in this situation a chest x-ray is usually normal. The only way to test for LTBI is to administer a tuberculin skin test, or to use a new blood test called an interferon gamma release assay (IGRA).¹

About 10% of individuals with LTBI will progress to active tuberculosis (TB) disease. This occurs when the TB organisms begin to multiply, and break through the body's immune system defenses. Individuals with tuberculosis disease usually have symptoms of TB, such as: cough lasting more than three weeks, fever, weight loss, night sweats, fatigue, and sometimes a cough that has blood in it. These individuals are usually infectious to other people through coughing or sneezing, until they receive appropriate treatment.

What is the tuberculin skin test?
The tuberculin skin test (TST or Mantoux test) is a test used to determine whether a person is infected with Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that caused tuberculosis disease. The TST is a good test for tuberculosis infection, but it is not a good test for tuberculosis disease.

How is the TST administered?
The TST is performed by injecting 0.1 ml of tuberculin purified protein derivative (PPD) into the inner surface of the forearm, just under the skin. When the test is done properly, the injection should produce a pale elevation of the skin (a wheal) 6 to 10 mm in diameter. A trained healthcare worker familiar with TST technique, interpretation, and indications for testing must perform the test. Tuberculin does not contain any living organisms.

How is the TST read?
The skin test must be read between 48 and 72 hours after administration. A patient who does not return for the reading within 72 hours will need to have a repeat test performed. The reaction should be measured in millimeters of induration (a hardened area of swelling); the diameter of the indurated area should be measured across the forearm, perpendicular to the long axis of the forearm. The reader should NOT measure erythema (redness).

How are TST reactions interpreted?
When interpreting the TST result, the healthcare provider must consider three important factors:

1. The size of the skin reaction, measured in millimeters of induration;
2. Possible causes of false-negative and false-positive reactions; and
3. The individual’s risk of development of active tuberculosis if truly infected

For most healthcare workers, a TST reaction of 10 mm or greater is considered positive; however, there are special situations where a TST less than 10 mm might also be considered positive (see the online Canadian Tuberculosis Standards for more information on test interpretation).

What are false-positive reactions?
Some persons may react to the TST even though they are not infected with M. tuberculosis. Possible causes of false-positive reactions include: infection with specific bacteria found in the environment that are similar but not identical to tuberculosis bacteria; previous Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination (see page 28); incorrect method of TST administration; or incorrect interpretation of the reaction.

What are false-negative reactions?
Some persons may not react to the TST even though they are infected with M. tuberculosis. Possible causes of false-negative reactions include: a weakness in the immune system’s ability to react to foreign substances; recent tuberculosis infection (i.e., exposure to an infectious case occurred less than eight weeks ago); tuberculosis infection that occurred many years ago; very young age (less than six months old); recent live-virus vaccination (e.g., measles, mumps, rubella vaccine; possibly chickenpox and yellow fever vaccines); some viral illnesses (e.g., measles and chickenpox); overwhelming tuberculosis disease (this is one reason why a TST is not a good test for active tuberculosis disease); incorrect method of TST administration; incorrect interpretation of the reaction.

¹ Interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) are new blood tests that can test for latent tuberculosis infection. Unlike the TST, IGRA tests are not influenced by a past history of Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccination. The two IGRA tests approved for use in Canada are QuantiFERON TB Gold and T-SPOT.TB.
Tuberculosis and TSTs

Is the TST safe?
Almost everyone can safely receive a TST; this includes infants and children, pregnant people, those with HIV infection, and those who have received a BCG vaccine in the past.

Who should not have a TST?
Individuals who should not receive a TST include: persons who have had a severe reaction to a previous TST (e.g., severe skin damage, blistering, or a severe allergic reaction that interferes with breathing); those with a documented previously positive TST; those with documentation of treatment for active TB disease or latent tuberculosis infection.

What are the side effects of a TST?
The TST is very well tolerated, and serious reactions are extremely rare. As with any injection through the skin, there is a small risk of infection or bleeding at the injection site, or fainting after the injection. Some individuals will notice some redness, swelling, or tenderness at the injection site. Rarely, blistering of the skin may occur. There is a very small risk (approximately one in one million) of a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis, manifested by an itchy body rash, swelling of the mouth and throat, and difficulty breathing. Any serious reactions should be reported to the individual’s healthcare provider.

What should be done to the area where the TST was administered?
The area of the TST should be left alone, and should not be bandaged, scratched, or have any lotions or compresses applied to it before it is read.

How often can TSTs be repeated?
In general, there is no risk associated with repeated tuberculin skin tests, as long as previous tests were tolerated. If a person does not return within 48 to 72 hours for a tuberculin skin test reading, a second test can be placed as soon as possible.

Can TSTs be given to persons receiving vaccinations?
A TST can be given at the same time as most vaccinations. However, vaccination with live viruses may interfere with TST reactions. The TST should either be given on the same day as vaccination with a live virus vaccine, or four weeks after the administration of the live virus vaccine. Live virus vaccinations include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), varicella (chickenpox), and yellow fever vaccines; live virus vaccinations do NOT include hepatitis A or B, tetanus/diphtheria, polio, pertussis, or injectable influenza vaccines. At the present time, Canadian guidelines recommend that a TST should be administered and read before COVID-19 immunization or delayed for at least 4 weeks after vaccination. Vaccination with COVID-19 vaccines may take place at any time after all steps of tuberculin skin testing have been completed.

What is a two-step TST?
In some persons who are infected with M. tuberculosis, the ability to react to a TST may drop over time. When the very first TST is administered years after tuberculosis infection occurred, these persons might have a false-negative reaction. However, this TST may stimulate the immune system, causing a positive (boosted) reaction to future tests. Giving a second TST after an initial negative TST reaction is called two-step testing. The second test is ideally performed 7-28 days after the first (up to one year later).

What is a two-step TST indicated?
Two-step testing is useful for the initial skin testing of adults who may be tested again in the future, such as health care workers. This two-step approach can reduce the likelihood that a boosted reaction to a subsequent TST will be misinterpreted as a recent infection. A two-step usually only needs to be done ONCE; future TSTs can be single, one-step TSTs.

What if I have a significant or positive TST?
If you have a positive TST, this may mean that you were infected with TB bacteria at some point in your life. Your healthcare provider will provide you with additional information, and advice on what you need to do. A chest x-ray will be required for students with a positive TST to look for evidence of previous TB infection or disease, as well as a TB symptom review. The student may then choose to be referred to a specialized clinical site for additional information on tuberculosis, and for consideration of LTBI therapy (referral is optional for students).

How is LTBI usually treated?
Treatment for LTBI usually consists of a single medication called isoniazid or INH that is taken every day for nine months. There are other LTBI treatment regimens that may be offered by the clinician, for example, rifampin daily for four months. Treatment is optional, but often recommended, particularly for young healthcare workers.
Tuberculosis and TSTs

Why is tuberculosis important to a healthcare worker?
If a healthcare worker has latent (sleeping) tuberculosis infection, they may one day go on to develop active (infectious) tuberculosis disease. It is possible that a healthcare worker may then infect others with the tuberculosis bacteria, including vulnerable clients in healthcare settings (for an example of this in the literature, please see [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5450a2.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5450a2.htm)). It is also important to document a worker’s baseline TST status in case testing needs to be performed after a future exposure to TB disease; the baseline result can be compared with the post-exposure result.

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Tuberculosis and TST Requirements

**TB History:** In the Immunization Package students will need to answer if they have a previous positive TB history (e.g., previous positive TST; previous treatment for TB disease). Students with a positive TB history will need to supply a chest X-ray report ordered on or after the date of the positive TB history; if such a report is not available, another chest X-ray should be arranged.

**Testing for latent tuberculosis infection:** All students without contraindications ("reasons not to") must have a two-step TST documented; students must also have a recent TST performed within six months of the start of the program. Most students will therefore require a two-step TST at this time, but students who have already had a two-step TST documented previously will only require a one-step (single) TST when starting the program. Students found to have a positive TST will require a chest x-ray and will need to complete a TB symptom review.

**Students with a positive TST:** Such students will be provided additional information on optional confirmatory testing or treatment. A positive TST will not affect a student’s ability to complete a program, nor will it affect future employment.
BCG Vaccination

What is BCG?
BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guérin) is a live vaccine that was developed in the 1920s. It helps protect babies and young children against the most severe forms of TB disease. BCG is one of the most commonly used vaccines in the world and is frequently used in other countries where TB infection and TB disease are more common. It is rarely used in Canada today, apart from usage in certain communities at higher risk for TB disease.

How do I know if I had a BCG vaccine?
Student can check their immunization records or check with their parents or former guardians to see if they have ever had a BCG vaccine. Most new healthcare students today have never had a BCG vaccine, but some may have. In Manitoba, BCG immunizations were discontinued in the 1970s for healthcare workers, but such vaccines are still given to infants living in most TB-endemic Indigenous communities in Manitoba. Most people who have had a BCG have a characteristic scar at the site at which it was administered (e.g., upper arm or shoulder, see page 19). However, not everyone who had a BCG vaccination will have a scar.

Why is BCG not used routinely in Canada?
Since TB disease rates have dropped in most communities, the risk of infants and young children being exposed to TB is very small (the exception to this is infants who live in communities with high rates of TB). Also, there can be serious side effects from the BCG vaccine, particularly in individuals who have problems with their immune system. Finally, BCG may make the tuberculin skin test more difficult to interpret, limiting the usefulness of this test (see below).

Does a history of BCG vaccination mean that the tuberculin skin test will always be positive?
People vaccinated with BCG may have a positive reaction to a tuberculin skin test (TST or Mantoux). This reaction may be due to the BCG vaccine or to a real TB infection (BCG likely does not prevent TB infection; it is intended only to prevent the development of severe TB disease in those already infected with the TB bacteria). BCG given in the first year of life will usually not cause a positive TST 10 or more years later; those who were vaccinated after the age of six years, or adults who had many BCG vaccinations are much more likely to have a positive TB skin test because of BCG. Since the reaction from BCG fades over time, adults who were vaccinated with BCG very early in life should generally consider a positive skin test as indicative of true TB infection. Healthcare workers with a history of BCG vaccination should still have a TST performed.

How can I tell if my positive TST was caused by my previous BCG vaccination?
Interferon gamma release assays (IGRAs) are new blood tests that can test for latent tuberculosis infection. The two IGRA tests approved for use in Canada are QuantiFERON TB Gold and T-SPOT.TB. Unlike the TST, IGRA tests are not influenced by a past history of BCG vaccination. An individual who has a positive TST and who had a previous BCG vaccination may opt to have an IGRA test performed as an aid in confirming whether the individual likely has latent tuberculosis infection. Students with positive TSTs who are interested in hearing more about the optional IGRA test should contact the Immunization Program for details.
Influenza

What is influenza?
Influenza (also called “the flu”) is a common respiratory viral illness spread person-to-person. In Canada, influenza season usually runs from November to May, and sometimes later. Symptoms may include fever, headache, cough, muscle aches, runny nose, sore throat and exhaustion. Symptoms can be similar to other viral illnesses such as a cold; however, the symptoms are usually more serious than a cold, and onset of influenza is usually more sudden than other respiratory pathogens. Most individuals will recover from the illness after 7 to 10 days, but sometimes this takes longer for high-risk individuals. Some people may carry and spread the influenza virus but have no symptoms. Some individuals, particularly babies, the elderly, and those with immune system problems are particularly vulnerable to the complications of influenza, including pneumonia and meningitis.

How can influenza be spread?
Influenza virus is spread when a person who has influenza coughs, sneezes, or speaks, and sends influenza virus into the air, allowing others to inhale the virus. Influenza viruses may also be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches his or her own mouth or nose before washing his or her hands.

Canada and Manitoba
Influenza and related pneumonia is ranked among the top 10 leading causes of death in Canada. Although the overall number and severity of influenza infections can vary from year to year, it is estimated that an average of 12,200 hospitalizations and approximately 3,500 deaths attributable to influenza occur annually. The incidence of influenza is often underreported, since the illness may be confused with other viral illnesses, and many people with influenza-like illness (ILI) do not seek medical care or have viral diagnostic testing done. In Manitoba, surveillance is conducted to monitor general patterns of seasonal influenza activity, and not the actual number of cases.

Can influenza be prevented?
The most effective way to prevent influenza is to be vaccinated each year in the fall. There are several influenza vaccines available in Canada including trivalent (three strains) and quadrivalent (four strains) vaccine; live (intranasal) and non-live (injectable) vaccine. Generally adult healthcare workers should choose the injectable influenza vaccine due to superior efficacy; as well, live vaccine recipients should avoid close association with persons with severe immune compromising conditions (e.g., bone marrow transplant recipients requiring isolation) for at least two weeks following vaccination, because of the theoretical risk for transmitting a vaccine virus and causing infection. Other ways to reduce the risk of infection with influenza include: regular hand washing, keeping one's hands away from the nose or mouth, and not attending school, or visiting patients in hospitals or personal care homes when ill.

What is pandemic influenza?
In addition to existing concerns over the usual seasonal influenza, there is always concern over an impending worldwide influenza pandemic; an influenza pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization in 2009. An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus for which people have little or no immunity emerges and spreads rapidly throughout the world. The rate of infection and fatality rate may be greater than what is seen with the seasonal influenza that occurs now, particularly if an effective vaccine is not available. While it is difficult to predict when influenza pandemics will occur or their severity, governments, public health officials, and businesses should prepare for the worst (additional information on Canadian Pandemic Influenza Preparedness is available online).

Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?
Healthcare providers are in a unique position to both acquire influenza infection in the workplace, and to transmit infection to patients, many of whom are extremely vulnerable. As it is possible to transmit influenza prior to the onset of symptoms, providers may not even know that they are infectious to others.

Influenza Immunization Requirement
All students are required to submit documentation of an annual influenza vaccination by November 30 every year. For healthcare workers the quadrivalent, injectable (non-live) influenza vaccine is preferred.
Influenza Vaccine Myths

Influenza Myth #1: Influenza is not a serious illness.
FACT: Each year in Canada, thousands of people die from influenza, or from complications of influenza like pneumonia. Deaths occur mainly among infants, the elderly, and those with immune system problems.

Influenza Myth #2: If you do not have a high-risk medical condition you do not need to be vaccinated.
FACT: Any person who wants to protect his or her health can consider influenza vaccination. Healthcare workers who have contact with high-risk individuals have a professional responsibility to do what they can to protect these individuals from the spread of diseases such as influenza.

Influenza Myth #3: If you never get influenza you do not need to be immunized.
FACT: If you have never had influenza this does not mean that you will not get it in the future. No one is completely immune from influenza viruses, even if a person has already had the disease; most people can get sick with influenza several times over the course of his or her life, since the virus changes from year to year.

Influenza Myth #4: The influenza vaccine can give you influenza.
FACT: The injectable influenza vaccine contains non-living influenza virus particles that cannot multiply or cause infection. The inactivated influenza vaccine contains weakened living organisms that cannot cause influenza disease in an immune competent person.

Influenza Myth #5: The influenza vaccine causes severe reactions or side effects.
FACT: Influenza vaccine is very safe. Most people experience no symptoms after their influenza shot other than some redness or soreness for one or two days at the area where the needle was given; this rarely interferes with normal activities. Healthy adults receiving influenza vaccine show no increase in the frequency of fever or other systemic symptoms compared with those receiving placebo.

Influenza Myth #6: Getting an influenza shot every year may weaken your immune system.
FACT: The vaccine strengthens your body’s immune system, by preparing and boosting it to help you fight the influenza virus if you contract it. People who get the influenza shot each year are better protected against influenza than those who do not get vaccinated.

Influenza Myth #7: You should not get the influenza shot if you have a lot of different allergies.
FACT: Most allergies are not a reason for refusing an influenza shot. Individuals who have had a previous allergic reaction to the influenza vaccine, or any of its components should talk to their doctor first before getting an influenza shot. Egg allergy is not a contraindication to the influenza vaccine.

Influenza Myth #8: Vaccination is not necessary since there are better ways of preventing the spread of influenza, such as frequent handwashing, covering your mouth when coughing, or staying home when you are sick.
FACT: These are all very important ways to prevent the spread of infections such as influenza, but they do not mean that influenza vaccination is not necessary. Despite our best efforts, influenza may still spread throughout the community. As well, individuals who develop influenza may be infectious to others prior to the onset of symptoms, limiting the benefit of staying home when ill.

Influenza Myth #9: The influenza vaccine protects against the viruses or bacteria that cause colds or stomach illnesses.
FACT: The influenza virus is very different and more severe than the common cold, or gastrointestinal illnesses (“stomach flu”). Influenza vaccine does not protect against the viruses or bacteria that cause colds, or gastrointestinal illnesses; the vaccine only helps the body build immunity to the viruses that cause influenza.

Influenza Myth #10: Someone you know got the influenza vaccine and still got the flu, so this proves the vaccine doesn’t work.
FACT: At any given time there are many different types of viruses being spread that can cause symptoms like influenza, but are not actually the influenza virus. The influenza vaccine contains three or four types of influenza viruses that are likely to cause influenza in the coming winter months. These are the only viruses the vaccine will protect against. Because these strains may change each year, a person needs to get the vaccine each year to be protected against new strains. When the strains in the vaccine are well matched to the strains of influenza virus in the community, the influenza shot prevents influenza in eight of ten vaccinated persons. In elderly people and people who have certain chronic health conditions, the vaccine may not work as well to prevent infection, but it will still reduce symptoms and the risk of serious health concerns (e.g., hospitalization and death).

Influenza Myth #11: If you are pregnant or breastfeeding you should not have an influenza shot.
FACT: An influenza vaccine is safe during pregnancy. In fact, national Canadian guidelines recommend that all pregnant patients receive a non-live influenza vaccination to protect themselves. Babies less than six months of age, especially newborns, are at high risk from the complications of influenza, but cannot be vaccinated because their immune response to influenza vaccine is not strong enough. Vaccinating their close contacts, including their parents, can help to protect them and reduce their risk of becoming infected.
Travel Health Services

When would I need to go to a travel health clinic?
Many students will at some point travel outside of Canada, either as part of their formal education, for work, or for a vacation. It is important for students planning international journeys to access high quality travel health advice, to ensure a positive travel experience. A travel health clinic can both help travellers stay healthy while traveling, and also provide assistance if a traveller experiences illness after arriving back in Canada.

What does a travel health clinic offer? A certified travel health clinic can review with a traveller many traveling basics, such as:

- **Education**: advice ranging from problem areas/conflict zones, safety issues, food and water precautions, how to manage diarrhea, mosquito and insect precautions, altitude information, protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), etc.
- **Immunizations**: Recommended vaccinations depend on the area of the world to which the traveller is embarking and may include updates to any routine vaccinations (e.g., measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, pertussis, influenza) and travel specific vaccinations such as hepatitis A, hepatitis B, rabies, typhoid, meningococcal meningitis, Japanese encephalitis and yellow fever immunizations. Some vaccinations are required in order to legally enter certain countries. Proper documentation of vaccinations is also sometimes required for travel to some areas.
- **Prophylaxis**: Travel to some areas of the world requires a traveller to take medications to avoid becoming ill with disease. An example of this is malaria "prophylaxis" (treatment used to prevent infection): if at risk, the traveller will begin to take antimalarial prescription medication once a day or once a week before leaving, and then while away and for a certain period of time upon leaving a malaria risk area, to avoid acquiring this disease from mosquitoes.
- **Supplies**: A travel health clinic can also help a traveller organize or provide information on what should be included in a First Aid travel pack: travellers can purchase items for their kit. A travel health clinic can also sell supplies such as insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets, insect repellent, water purification kits, sunscreen or sunblock lotions, a personal supply of syringes and needles (in the event of requiring medical procedures while abroad and where there is a lack of a reliable supply in a foreign hospital), and many other essential items.

Students can also attend a travel health clinic to have school requirements reviewed (charges will apply).

Do travel health services cost anything? As the majority of travel health services are not publicly insured services, clients will be charged for services, immunizations, and supplies. However, this should be seen as essential "travel insurance" to make a trip as safe and enjoyable as possible. (NOTE: Manitoba Health covers post travel clinic visits, for travellers experiencing travel-related illness on return)

WHERE should I go for travel health advice? There are several travel health clinics in Manitoba (a list of Manitoba travel health clinics is listed at: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/yf-fj/clinique/mb-eng.php). Travellers who do not wish to go to a travel health clinic should, at a minimum, visit their own primary care provider or healthcare provider, who can review current travel health resources, or contact the Manitoba travel health network for advice. However, the more exotic the trip, the more travellers are encouraged to make use of a high-quality, certified travel health clinic.

WHEN should I go for travel health advice? It is best to make an appointment at least 6-8 weeks prior to your departure; this is particularly important when a traveller is being offered vaccinations, as some require several weeks to build the traveller’s immunity. However, even if a trip is just around the corner, an appointment with a travel health clinic will still prove beneficial.

Why is this especially important for healthcare workers?
In addition to their desire to protect themselves and their families, travellers should recognize a duty to protect other Canadians by reducing opportunities to import diseases. This is particularly true of travellers who are healthcare workers, who have the opportunity to work with and serve patients at risk for infections.

A list of Manitoba clinics certified to administer yellow fever vaccine is listed at: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/yf-fj/clinique/mb-eng.php

A Travel Health Clinic with certified nurses and specialist physicians affiliated with the University of Manitoba is: The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Travel Health & Tropical Medicine Services, 490 Hargrave Street, 940-TRIP (8747), www.wrha.mb.ca/community/travel

RFHS students planning international travel can request a copy of their immunization records from the Immunization Program.
**COVID-19**

**Please Note:** Students are encouraged to review online resources periodically to obtain the most current information about the COVID-19 virus, public health measures, and COVID-19 vaccines. A good resource is the Manitoba COVID-19 resource page: [https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html](https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html)

**What is COVID-19?**
COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a new infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), believed to have evolved from a virus moving from bats to humans through an intermediary animal host. The first outbreak started in late 2019 and spread to countries throughout the world. The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020.

**How is COVID-19 spread?**
The virus is transmitted mainly through the respiratory route, when those infected with COVID-19 release droplets as they breathe, talk, cough, sneeze or sing; these droplets are then inhaled by others leading to infection. Close interactions and those that last longer are more likely to lead to transmission. Infection can occur through contaminated surfaces, although this is not a common mode of transmission. People are at their peak of infectiousness when their symptoms start and are infectious for two days prior to this. Their infectiousness declines after the first week, but they remain infectious for several days after this. Those diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate away from others until they are no longer infectious.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**
The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are:
- Fever
- Cough
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Some individuals do not develop symptoms after being infected. Among those who develop symptoms, about 80% recover from the disease without needing hospital treatment. About 15% become seriously ill and require oxygen and 5% become critically ill and need intensive care. Complications leading to death may include respiratory failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), sepsis and septic shock, thromboembolism, and/or multiorgan failure, including injury of the heart, liver or kidneys. COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of severe infection including hospitalization, ICU admission and death. Studies are being conducted to determine the long-term effects of the disease with increasing evidence of the impacts of long-COVID; some studies suggest ~10% of people infected have symptoms lasting longer than 12 weeks. Some data also suggests that people vaccinated against COVID-19 also have less symptoms of long-COVID.

**Who is at risk of COVID-19?**
People of any age can get COVID-19, including children and adults. The elderly and individuals with certain underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of more severe COVID-19 illness.

**How is COVID-19 diagnosed?**
COVID-19 can be diagnosed by rapid antigen tests and by nucleic acid tests, which detect the presence of viral RNA fragments (PCR tests). The PCR test is typically done on respiratory samples obtained with a nasopharyngeal swab. Currently in Manitoba, most people are advised to test with a rapid antigen test with PCR tests available for select populations. Currently in Manitoba health care workers who test positive on a rapid antigen test are eligible for a PCR test.

**How can COVID-19 be prevented?**
Preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 include getting immunized against COVID-19, staying at home, wearing a mask in public, keeping a two-meter distance from others, washing hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, practicing good respiratory hygiene, and avoiding touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

**Why is this disease important to a healthcare worker?**
Healthcare providers are in a unique position to both acquire COVID-19 in the workplace, and to transmit infection to patients and staff, and members of the public.

2 doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine is recommended for all RFHS students. All students are encouraged to receive a 3rd booster dose as recommended for health care workers. These recommendations may change as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.
Resources

The following excellent resources can provide useful information regarding vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases; information from these sources was used to create the Student Manual:

Available through your local bookstore:


Available on the Internet:


Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases-Public Health Agency of Canada www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/irid-diir/index-eng.php

Canadian Public Health Association https://www.cpha.ca/vaccination

Caring for Kids – Canadian Paediatric Society https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Vaccines and Immunizations – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – USA www.cdc.gov/vaccines

Immunization Action Coalition www.vaccineinformation.org

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Intramuscular injection. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; James Gathany

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Figure 1: Tetanus. Portrait by Sir Charles Bell. Used with permission of The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

Figure 2: Diphtheria. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Figure 3: Polio. Ellyn W. Ogden, MPH, USAID.

Figure 4: Pertussis. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Figure 5: Measles. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Barbara Rice.

Figure 6: Mumps. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; NIP; Barbara Rice.

Figure 7: Rubella. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Figure 8: Hepatitis B. Courtesy of Patricia Walker, MD, Ramsey Clinic Associates, St. Paul, MN

Figure 9: Varicella. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Dr. Thomas F. Sellers, Emory University

Figure 10: Bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccination scar. Manitoba Tuberculosis Control Program; personal communication.

Figure 11: Tuberculin skin test (TST or Mantoux). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Gabrielle Benenson.

Figure 12: Influenza. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Brian Judd.

Many of the above photos were obtained courtesy of the Public Health Image Library (PHIL) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an excellent source of medical and public health photographs, illustrations, and multimedia files (http://phil.cdc.gov/phil/home.asp).