

Immunization

Overview

Immunization requirements for Health and Human Services faculty who are in practice with students, risk exposure to communicable diseases because of their contact with patients or material from patients with infections, both diagnosed and undiagnosed. Maintenance of immunity against vaccine-preventable diseases is an integral part of a health care facilities' occupational health program. Immunization helps ensure that you are protected from potential infections in the context of your practicum as your place of work, and to also protect clients from becoming infected.

Immunization Record

Each faculty member in Health and Human Services is asked to complete the VIHA immunization record. If you are employed, this form will be sent with your appointment and should be filled out by your local public health nurse. Faculty are required to protect those at greatest risk of complications and death from contact with seasonal infections such as influenza. This requirement ensures that the NIC programs are acting in accordance with the policies of the facilities in our health region regarding immunization and influenza immunization (preferred option)/wearing a surgical mask, and the exclusion of non-immunized staff during outbreaks.

Declining Immunizations

Faculty have the right to decline immunizations and when this is the case, the faculty member will be required to complete a "Declination form" for their file in HR. Non-immunized faculty who are excluded from practice due to agency/health facilities policies may jeopardize their students' success if an alternate placement cannot be found for the practice group or another instructor is not available.

Non-immunized faculty who are excluded from practice due to health facilities policies would have the following options:

1. Take a leave without pay.
2. Choose to take antiviral medication.
This typically takes 24 hours to provide protection, during which time the faculty member would be required to take leave without pay.
3. Take the vaccine(s).
Vaccines take 14 days to provide protection so the faculty member would need to take leave without pay during this time.
4. Influenza Immunization - Wear a mask
Wear a surgical mask in patient care areas for the duration of the influenza season (dates to be determined by the Provincial Health Officer).

Faculty members who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons will remain on the payroll during any time that they cannot work in a facility due to an outbreak, provided that they submit medical documentation of their condition.

Faculty Responsibility

It is the College's expectation that each employee will attend to their professional responsibility of keeping their immunization records up to date and to provide VIHA and/or practice agencies with their immunization status upon request.

Faculty working in agencies with students and clients must report symptoms of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) as soon as possible to their Department Chair and prior to coming to work. Faculty should also report symptoms of ILI to the person responsible for infection control in the agency/facility.

Commonly asked questions

How much does the immunization cost?

Costs for most or all relevant immunizations required by the Health Authorities are covered by BC Medical Services Plan for Health faculty working in clinical settings. The Hepatitis B vaccine is the exception. You need to have a prescription from your doctor in order to claim the Hepatitis B vaccine on your benefit plan. If you are an employee and do not have benefit coverage under NIC or another employer contact the Division of Health and Human Services for reimbursement.

Where can I get immunized?

Immunization services can be accessed through the local primary care and family physicians as well as primary care clinics and community health centers.

Where do I get the forms?

If you are employed this form will be sent with your appointment and should be filled out by your local public health nurse.

How frequently do I need to update my immunization or take the TB Skin Test?

You need to consult with the Public Health Nurse to discuss the frequency of immunization and TB Testing given your context of practice. As everyone has a slightly different teaching assignment the Public Health Nurse can help you determine what is appropriate for you.

What if I am hired to substitute for a faculty member or take a sessional assignment?

If the occasion comes up in the future for you to substitute for a faculty member or take a sessional assignment you will need to be prepared in advance to ensure your personal safety in practice and to ensure influenza protection if there is an outbreak. You are responsible for ensuring your immunization paperwork is up to date prior to taking the assignment.