

Employee Immunization Policy

Reviewed Date		Number	HS0107
Revised Date	February 27, 2025	Approved Date	May 10, 2000

Introduction

The most effective prevention measure to protect staff and clients from acquiring a vaccine preventable disease is immunization. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) promotes immunization as an important health choice and encourages staff to be advocates and role models by following current recommendations based on the Canadian Immunization Guide.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act states that employers, supervisors and staff have a role in preventing occupational health exposures; by limiting the exposure to biological, chemical or physical agents. Staff may be exposed to a client or to other staff with a vaccine preventable disease while providing services for the SMDHU. All staff should consider being immunized as per the [Adult Immunization- Recommendations for Routine Immunization in Healthy Adults from the Canadian Immunization Guide](#) in consultation with their primary care providers. Note: Immunization recommendations may vary depending on staff’s health. (i.e. pregnancy and breastfeeding or adults with risk factors).

Purpose

To protect the health and well-being of SMDHU clients and staff by having staff follow immunization and tuberculin skin testing (TST) requirements and recommendations.

This policy will allow the SMDHU to:

- Collect information on the immunization/immunity status or Tuberculin (TB) status of selected SMDHU staff as per appendix A.
- Review staff’s measles immunization/immunity status when there is deployment or redeployment involving an investigation of a case or cluster of measles where there may be potential exposure to a case of measles.
- Protect as much as possible staff from acquiring and potentially spreading measles during a case or cluster investigation.
- Encourage staff to be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases they may be exposed to in the course of their work.

Legislative Authority

Occupational Health and Safety Act (1990) - S.25 (2)
 Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER H.

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

Risk Assessment (RA): is an activity whereby the staff evaluates the likelihood of exposure to an infectious agent, looking at the specific interaction with the client and the environment and under available conditions and then chooses the appropriate action(s) needed to minimize the risk of exposure from client to staff, staff to client, client to client and staff to staff.

Staff: all individuals employed by or working for the SMDHU, including volunteers, students, contracted personnel (working on a full day basis for > 10 consecutive days), and members of the Board of Health.

Supervisor: is the person to whom a staff member directly reports. Staff may report to a supervisor, manager, Vice President (VP) or the Medical Officer of Health.

Employee Immunity to Measles: Health care workers should have 2 doses of measles containing vaccine administered at least 4 weeks apart or demonstrate measles immunity titre (blood test). [Canadian Immunization Guide](#)

Policy

Required documented status for immunization(s)/immunity and TST will be a condition of employment for specific positions in designated programs, as outlined in Table 1 (Appendix A). The level of risk of exposure and ability to spread infection varies with different positions and programs at SMDHU and is reflected in Tables 1 and 2. It is the responsibility of new and current staff and current staff changing positions to ensure they meet the requirements, in a timely fashion. Managers will be responsible for determining the immunizations and testing required for their program's specific role, as per Table 1, and for notifying Human Resources (HR) of any requirements to provide their immunization/immunity status before a position is posted. Internal and external job postings will mention that immunization and TST will be required for specific positions in designated programs. Staff at increased risk of exposure to sewage, needle sticks, or other occupational risks should discuss receiving the highly recommended vaccines as per Table 2 (Appendix A), with their primary health care provider.

Procedures

Procedures relating to new Staff:

1. Requirements for having documented immunization/immunity and TST status on file is a condition of employment for specific staff in designated programs and will be discussed with both external and internal candidates during the interview process.
2. Human Resources will draft a contract or offer of employment for the selected candidate that requires review of Immunization policy and submission of status of measles immunization/immunity prior to first day of employment.
3. A list of requirements for reporting immunization/immunity and TST status as per Appendix A will be provided with offers of employment for review.

4. TST will be provided at no cost to the employee, if administered at SMDHU through Infectious Disease program.
5. Staff are encouraged to review with their primary health care provider the Adult Immunization - Recommendations for Routine Immunization in Healthy Adults from the [Canadian Immunization Guide](#) as well as their current immunization status. This review will allow staff to make an informed decision on whether they need to acquire the recommended adult vaccinations to protect themselves and to also help maintain a current record of their immunizations and immune status.
6. Staff who need to have their immunization(s) updated should receive immunization(s) from their primary health care provider. If staff do not have a primary health care provider, staff can access the SMDHU's public immunization clinics. Appointments for SMDHU clinics should be made by contacting the SMDHU Immunization Program.
7. Staff are required to comply with other agency policies on vaccine preventable diseases cited in this policy.

Procedures related to all existing Staff:

1. Current staff are responsible for ensuring that the requirements for reporting immunization/TST status is up to date for their specific position/program and may contact their primary care provider for verification of measles immunization/immunity status. Staff are responsible for providing proof of their immunization status/immunity or medical exemption or Ontario Human Rights Code grounds for exemption to Human Resources for filing.
2. Successful internal candidates who are changing positions will be responsible for contacting their health care provider or SMDHU Immunization program if they do not have a health care provider, completing required immunization and testing in a timely fashion, and submitting the record of immunization/TST once they are up to date.
3. Once there is documented proof of a once-in-a-lifetime two-step TST, and all required immunizations have been completed, the employee will provide proof of measles immunization/immunity and where applicable TST and submit to Human Resources.

Work Exclusion:

Non immune staff may be excluded from the workplace and from work in the community for the duration of time of local measles transmission if suitable on-site work is not available.

However, two options may be available during work exclusion:

Option A: Work at home, if determined to be feasible and appropriate by the staff member's supervisor with the concurrence of the department VP. The department VP will inform Human Resources of staff working from home.

Option B: Exclusion from work, where the health unit will consider and may permit use of one or more of the time accommodation options listed below:

- Use of accumulated flex time or compensating time

- Use of vacation
- Unpaid leave of absence
- Paid leave of absence. However, this option is only available for those with a medical contraindication for receiving the measles vaccine if work from home is not an option.

Privacy

Any personal information received pursuant to this policy and relating to an employee's vaccination status will:

- be collected only as necessary and reasonable to achieve the purposes of this policy, including protecting the health and safety of employees and clients, limiting the spread of vaccine preventable diseases in the workplace and compliance with applicable laws;
- be used for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of workers and third parties in the workplace, including, for example, effectively responding in the event of a measles response;
- be disclosed only to representatives designated by SMDHU to enable them to carry out the objectives of this policy and to protect the health and safety of the employee concerned, co-workers, visitors, suppliers, or the general public, if any; and
- not be disclosed to any third party unless SMDHU receives employee consent or as otherwise required by law.

Personal information received under this policy will be treated as confidential and will be stored and retained by SMDHU in accordance with the Personal Health Information Privacy Policy IM0101. Such personal information will be destroyed by SMDHU as soon as it is no longer of any use.

Related Policies

HS0106 Influenza Immunization

HS0122 COVID-19 Vaccination

HS0102 Staff Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids

IM0101 Personal Health Information Privacy Policy

Related Forms

HS0107 (F1) Record of Employee Immunity to Measles

Documentation Submission

Staff Immunization Submission

References:

Canadian Tuberculosis Standards 8th Edition. (2022). Public Health Agency of Canada. Chapters 5 / 6 / 15. Available from: <https://www.linksmedicus.com/news/canadian-tuberculosis-standards-8th-edition/>

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Viral Hepatitis – Hepatitis B Information. Available from: https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis-b/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/hbv/bfaq.htm

Communicable Diseases Surveillance Protocols. (2023). Ontario Hospital Association/Ontario Medical Association. Available from: <https://www.oha.com/guidance-and-resources/hospital-policies-and-operations/communicable-diseases-surveillance-protocols/>

Immunization Action Coalition. (2023). Ask the Experts: Diseases and Vaccines. Available from: http://www.immunize.org/askexperts/experts_mmr.asp

McMaster University Health Sciences. (2024). Hepatitis B Immunization and Serology Health Professional Programs. Available from: <https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/healthscreening/documents/HepatitisBImmunizationandSerologyInformation.pdf>

Ministry of Health. (2022). Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario & Information <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-01/moh-publicly-funded-immunization-schedule-en-2024-01-23.pdf>

Ontario Ministry of Labour. (2020). The Occupational Health and Safety Act 1990, Last amended 2022. Available from: <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/ohsa/index.php>

Public Health Ontario. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). (2015). Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice. NACI Schedule for Clinical Office Employee. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/B/2013/bp-clinical-office-practice.pdf>

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2024 – partial update). Canadian Immunization Guide. Available from:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-3-vaccination-specific-populations/page-11-immunization-workers.html>

Part 3. Vaccination of Specific Populations. Immunization of Health Care Workers <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-3-vaccination-specific-populations/page-11-immunization-workers.html#p3c10a2>

World Health Organization. (2023). Global TB Program. TB Data. Available from: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-tuberculosis-programme/data>

TB Country, Regional and Global Profiles. (2024). Available from: https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/tb_profiles/?inputs&entity_type=%22country%22&lan=%22EN%22&iso2=%22AF%22

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

Revised February 27, 2025

APPENDIX A

Table 1

Required Status on File: Immunization and TST for Specific Staff in Designated Programs / Roles

Disease / Test	Specific Staff Condition of employment	Designated Programs / Roles
Measles (MMR)*	Staff routinely interacting with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children under 18 months • pregnant women (regardless of year of birth for Health Care Workers as per Canadian Immunization Guide)	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Home Visitors <input type="checkbox"/> Immunization Program administrative staff <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing staff: Registered Practical Nurses; Public Health Nurses <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Health Program staff <input type="checkbox"/> Public facing administrative staff (branch office program assistant, receptionist) <input type="checkbox"/> Public health inspection staff who attend childcare settings.
Documented Two-step Tuberculin Skin Test (TST)* (once in a lifetime)	Staff at increased risk of exposure to tuberculosis (TB) as per the Canadian Tuberculosis Standards	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff assigned to TB case and contact management
Influenza	See HS0106 Staff Influenza Immunization Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> All staff
COVID – 19	See HS0122 COVID-19 Vaccination Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> All Staff

Table 2

Highly Recommended: Immunization for Specific Staff in Designated Programs / Roles – Canadian Immunization Guidelines*

Disease / Test	Specific Staff Condition of employment	Designated Programs / Roles
Hepatitis A	Staff with potential for exposure to sewage (discuss with Program manager)	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health Department (risk assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities and Infrastructure
Hepatitis B* (Hep B)	Staff at increased risk of needle sticks injury	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health Department (risk assessment) <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities and Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Family Home Visitors <input type="checkbox"/> Immunization Program and Sexual Health Program administrative staff <input type="checkbox"/> Infectious Diseases Program nurses <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing staff: Registered Practical Nurses; Public Health Nurses <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Health staff <input type="checkbox"/> Public facing administrative staff (branch office program assistant, receptionist)
Measles (MMR)*	(regardless of year of birth for Health Care Workers as per Canadian Immunization Guide)	<input type="checkbox"/> All staff