



DECLINATION OF BLOOD TESTING FOLLOWING A POSSIBLE OCCUPATIONAL EXPOSURE INCIDENT

Blood and other potentially infectious materials have long been recognized as a potential threat to the health of employees who are exposed to these materials. The primary agents of concern in current occupational settings are the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV). When injuries involve exposure to infectious agents, the affected worker is at risk of contracting disease. With this in mind, the employee should seek medical attention for evaluation and treatment, as indicated by the extent of the injury and exposure.

The evaluation includes blood tests for the above stated disease processes.

HIV

HIV destroys part of the immune system, specifically a type of white blood cell. These cells assist the body in fighting all types of germs and diseases and once destroyed, they are incapable of properly fighting infections. The immune system will become so weakened that the person can no longer fight infection and the individual becomes extremely ill.

Symptoms

Once infected there generally are no signs of illness initially, although some individuals may experience flu-like symptoms for several days to several weeks. Several years may actually pass before an individual has symptoms. Symptoms include: swollen lymph nodes, weight loss, fevers that come and go, infections in the mouth, diarrhea, and exhaustion for no reason. Eventually the virus attacks all of the body organs. The weakened immune system makes it difficult for the body to resist other diseases and infections. These can be life-threatening.

Treatment

There is no cure for HIV or AIDS but there are new medicines available that prolong life.

HBV (Hepatitis B)

The hepatitis B virus causes an inflammation of the liver. If complete recovery from this disease is not achieved, it can progress to chronic liver disease, cirrhosis of the liver, or cancer. Once infected, there is an incubation period of 4-20 weeks.

HCV (Hepatitis C)

The hepatitis C virus causes an inflammation of the liver which can lead to chronic liver disease. This type of inflammation is the leading reason for liver transplants. Once infected, there is an incubation period of 2-26 weeks. Most individuals infected have no symptoms even though they may have been infected years prior.

Symptoms (both HBV and HCV)

Generally, early symptoms mimic those associated with "flu". Symptoms may include general tiredness and weakness, fever, muscle aches, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea, and jaundice (yellowing of skin and whites of eyes). Some individuals may have no signs or symptoms and have no idea they are infected, but they can still transmit the disease to others. As the hepatitis progresses, the symptoms point to the liver as the source of the illness. Chemicals and toxins which are normally secreted by the liver build up in the blood and cause severe jaundice, foul breath, bitter taste in mouth, dark or tea-colored urine, abdominal pain, and white, light, or clay-colored stools. These diseases are considered contagious.

Diagnosis

Besides drawing blood for HBV and HCV testing, liver enzymes blood tests are generally drawn to provide baseline levels on the liver.

Treatment

If the symptoms are severe or lab tests indicate severe liver damage, it may become necessary for hospitalization. Hepatitis B can sometimes be treated using medications. It can take up to 6 months for an individual to feel better. The virus can be carried by individuals in their bodies and be contagious for the rest of their lives. Hepatitis C has also responded to a combination of two medications. It is imperative that individuals exposed to hepatitis virus be tested as early as possible to start treatment, due to the potential for the liver damage.

RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

Precautions for me to take, so as to not place others or myself in jeopardy include:

- Do not share personal care items such as razors or toothbrushes
- Do not donate blood, organs or tissue
- Avoid drinking alcohol
- Monitor the use of medications such as Tylenol
- Obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine series, if not done
- Abstain from sexual intercourse or use measures to prevent possible transmission of disease
- Refrain from breast feeding infants
- Obtain counseling (available whether testing completed or not)

More information may be obtained through

- Healthcare provider
- Student Health Office : brockk@bartonccc.edu phone 620-792-9233
- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov>

I have received initial evaluation following a possible occupational exposure incident, including information and counseling concerning the incident and risks. I have been provided with the above materials concerning the primary viruses (HIV, HBV,HCV) of concern following an exposure incident. At this time I choose not to have blood testing completed. (I understand I am not responsible for the cost of the recommended lab testing or medical services).

I have been informed of the importance of evaluation and the completion of said testing preferably completed within 1 hour of exposure but no later than 24 hours after exposure. I may choose to receive the testing within the 24-hour time frame.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Date of possible exposure: _____

Time of possible exposure: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____