

**Section:** Business and Support Operations

**Section Number:** 3.23.9

**Subject:** Safety, Security and Health: Hepatitis B Vaccinations

**Date of Present Issue:** 10/28/93

**Date of Previous Issues:**

### Background

Individuals are at risk for contracting Hepatitis B when they are frequently exposed to blood and body fluids while performing their duties. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), between 15% and 25% of health care workers will contract hepatitis B during their careers. An individual's risk is directly related to how often exposure to blood and other body fluids occurs.

Hepatitis B is a serious disease. "About 80% of those who contract acute hepatitis B do recover completely" (Pachter, 1988, p. 51). About 1% of people who contract hepatitis B die of a fulminant infection. The remaining people who do not recover become carriers. About 25% of carriers go on to develop chronic active hepatitis that may progress to permanent liver damage. Carriers can transmit the virus to their babies in utero, and carriers run a high risk of developing primary liver cancer.

In view of the hazards associated with Hepatitis B, as cited by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Lake Superior State University recommends that every employee, whose duties are determined to place them at risk, should consult with their personal physician or health care provider and seriously consider vaccination with the Recombivax HB vaccine prior to commencing risk-entailed duties. The CDC recommends vaccination for anyone frequently exposed to blood and other body fluids in the workplace. Serum derived from Heptavax B and the genetically engineered Recombivax HB are considered safe and effective by CDC. We are informed that between 90% to 96% of those who receive the full course of therapy (through injections) acquire immunity, which seems to be long term. As is the case with many infectious diseases and the use of vaccinations, there is an element of risk and no assurance of full protection. Individuals should inform themselves thoroughly and consult their personal physician or health care provider.

The attached informational article provides information on the value and risks of taking this vaccine, and should be read before making this decision.

### POLICY:

Any employee or volunteer whose work at the University involves frequent direct exposure to blood or other body fluids, is encouraged to receive vaccination against the Hepatitis B virus.

The Student Health Center, upon request from, and in consultation with, the department head will determine which jobs are at risk and recommended to receive this vaccine.

Students who are enrolled to receive credit for classes for which such vaccination is recommended, will pay for their own vaccinations, or sign a waiver form. Volunteers or employees whose jobs require such exposure will have cost of vaccinations paid for by their department, or will sign a waiver form if they choose to refuse the injections (see Attachment #1). Receipt of vaccination will be verified by the provider (see Attachment #2). Arrangements for receiving the vaccinations will be made by the Department Head through the Student Health Center, the Wellness C.A.R.E. Center or the County Health Department, whichever can provide the injections at the least cost.

A copy of the signed Waiver Form or Verification Form (Attachments #1 and #2) will be kept in the departmental office. The originals will be sent to the Employee Relations Office to be placed in the employee's personnel file