

## SOP 4 Immunisation/Vaccinations

Immunisation is one of the most effective health care interventions to minimise the risk of acquiring or spreading infections. Irish guidelines on immunisations required for HCW's are available at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/>.

- 4.1 All contracted staff must be assessed by occupational health department prior to commencement of work in dental and orthodontic service.
- 4.2 In practice, all staff members (whether they are new employees, currently in post, locums, temporary workers or supernumerary workers) who are at risk through contact with blood or body fluids should be immunised against Hepatitis B Virus, unless immunity to this as a result of natural infection or previous immunisation has been established.
- 4.3 All staff must be informed of the benefits and limitations of vaccination and non-vaccination and encouraged to avail of the annual Influenza vaccination. The flu vaccine can be lifesaving and the HSE Land Flu training module should be completed as part of the induction process. [HSE Land Flu Vaccine Course](https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/healthcare-workers/) <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/healthcare-workers/>.
- 4.4 Records of vaccination and follow up should be retained by Occupational Health/Dental Department.
- 4.5 Advice from Occupational Health should be sought for clarification if and when necessary.
- 4.6 It is recommended that staff know their immune status in relation to diseases they may be occupationally exposed to. Such diseases include:

Viruses	Bacteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Hepatitis B Virus infection;</li><li>○ Varicella Zoster Virus (chickenpox, shingles);</li><li>○ Measles Virus;</li><li>○ Mumps Virus;</li><li>○ Rubella virus (German Measles)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB)</i>;</li></ul>

Table 5: Examples of viruses and bacteria

#### 4.7 Exposure prone procedures

All staff carrying out exposure-prone procedures must comply with ‘*HSE Circular 012 - 2009 Prevention of Transmission of Blood Borne Diseases in the Healthcare Setting*’ concerning the transmission of blood borne diseases and provide evidence that they are not infectious for Hep. B and also for Hep. C in the case of all new staff. Further information is available by accessing the following links:

1. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/resources/hr-circulars/hse-hr-circular-012-2009-re-implementation-of-recommendations-of-report-on-the-prevention-of-transmission-of-blood-borne-diseases-in-the-health-care-setting.pdf>
2. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/hepatitis/hepatitisc/guidance/File,4352,en.pdf>

Exposure prone procedures are those invasive procedures which carry a risk of transmission from healthcare worker to the patient. HSE HR Circular 19/2008 defines Exposure Prone Procedures (EPPs) as ‘those invasive procedures where there is a risk that injury to the health care worker may result in the exposure of the patient’s open tissues to the blood of the health care worker. These include procedures where the health care worker’s gloved hands may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (e.g. spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient’s open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands or fingertips may not be completely visible at all times. Dental Nurses must not, under any circumstances, have work practices that allow them to put their fingers within a patient’s oral cavity.