

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Maidstone Hospital, Hermitage Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME16 9QQ. Tel: 01622 224324

Tunbridge Wells Hospital, Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Kent TN2 4QJ. Tel: 01892 633232

Email: [mtw-tr.occupationalhealth@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.occupationalhealth@nhs.net)

## SUPPORTING YOU WHILST UNDERTAKING A PLACEMENT AT MTW

**It is important that you read the following prior to commencing your placement**

### Introduction

The Occupational Health Service provides services to protect employees and students whilst at work and on placement in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW).

Understanding the relationship between health and the workplace is fundamental to the success of any organisation; it therefore makes sense to take care of employees - not just to comply with legislation, but to inspire greater commitment, efficiency and productivity. Whilst you are here at MTW we have a duty of care for your well-being.

***If you feel you need work place adjustment whilst undertaking your placement at MTW please contact us prior to commencing to ensure we can offer the necessary support and advice.***

### Contacting Us

Our opening hours are: 8.30—16.30 Monday to Friday.

**Tel: 01892 6 (33232) - Tunbridge Wells or 01622 2 (24324) - Maidstone**

Email: [mtw-tr.occupationalhealth@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.occupationalhealth@nhs.net)

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### Immunisation Status

The nature of your work may put you at risk of contracting an infectious disease. However, there are ways to minimise the risks by adopting safe working practices and, where appropriate, by being vaccinated.

#### Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)

**Measles** is a highly infectious viral disease spread by airborne droplets, contact with the skin or objects with the virus on them. Most people recover within 7-10 days but there can be serious complications, some of which can be fatal.

**Mumps** is a contagious viral disease transmitted through airborne droplets. It is usually a mild illness, although in a minority of cases there can be severe complications such as deafness and meningitis.

**Rubella** is a mild infectious disease. Maternal Rubella infection in the first trimester of pregnancy results in foetal damage in up to 90 per cent of infants. The risk is approximately 50% in the second trimester and zero near term.

The MMR vaccine is effective and safe with few side-effects. Two doses of the vaccine are required to obtain full immunity. Please ensure you have received two doses of the MMR vaccine prior to commencing your placement. The vaccination is part of the UK childhood vaccination programme, therefore if you are unsure of your status please contact your GP for further information and to receive the vaccination if required. You should ensure that you do not have any contact with known or suspected cases of measles, mumps or rubella during your placement if you have not received the MMR vaccinations.

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### **Tuberculosis (TB)**

Active TB disease is a serious infection that usually affects the lungs. Anyone can develop active TB, but you are more likely to develop it if you are already in poor health or have a poor immune system. With treatment, most cases are cured. Symptoms can include persistent cough (particularly with blood), fever, weight loss, sweats, malaise. If you have any of these symptoms please seek medical advice immediately. **Those** born after 1990 would not have received a BCG vaccination following the cessation of the school immunization programme in 2003. You should therefore ensure that you do not have any contact with known or suspected cases of TB during your placement.

### **Chicken Pox (Varicella Zoster Virus - VzV)**

Chickenpox is an acute, highly infectious disease which is transmitted directly by personal contact or by airborne droplets which is a common childhood disease. Sufferers usually experience a characteristic blistering rash accompanied by mild fever, loss of appetite, headache and sore throat. If you are unsure if you have ever had chickenpox you should ensure that you do not have any contact with known or suspected cases of chickenpox during your placement.

### **Needlestick Injuries, Sharps, Scratch and Bite Injuries / Splash of blood or body fluids**

*The following action must be taken in the event of a sharps injury, exposure to blood or bodily fluids, or if you have been bitten by a patient:*

- Flush the affected area gently with soap and water – **DO NOT SUCK THE PUNCTURE**
- Encourage bleeding by squeezing the punctured wound site
- Cover with a waterproof dressing, if appropriate
- Irrigate with water if splashing has occurred to eyes or other mucous membrane
- Inform the senior member of staff on duty **immediately**
- Contact Occupational Health (or the Accident and Emergency department out of hours) as soon as possible as you may need to have a vaccination or begin prophylactic treatment
- Complete an incident form electronically (DATIX). If known, include the name of the patient (source) from whom the sharp or bodily fluid came.

### **Skin Care**

Your skin is your body's first line of defence and acts as a barrier against harmful irritants. Although resilient, skin is not indestructible. It is therefore important to protect your skin from becoming dry and damaged and retain its protective properties. Take special care when hand-washing:

- Wet your hands first then apply only ONE pump of soap. Use lukewarm water.
- Make sure that you rinse your hands thoroughly to remove all traces of soap and detergent, and dry them thoroughly, paying attention to the spaces between your fingers. Pat hands dry rather than rubbing as this helps to prevent skin abrasion.
- Remove finger rings at work. Soap or detergents and water tend to collect under rings and make it difficult to achieve clean dry skin.
- Use water-based moisturiser EVERY time you wash your hands. Apply moisturiser carefully, including the spaces between your fingers.
- Use protective gloves when necessary for wet work or when handling chemicals or potentially infectious material. But only use gloves for as short a time as possible and don't wear them if you don't need to. If you do use gloves make sure they are clean, dry and intact (no holes).