

Patient information

Sharps Injury Guidance

Liverpool University Dental Hospital

This leaflet explains what will happen if a member of staff comes into contact with your blood or saliva in such a way that there is a risk of transmitting an infection.

On rare occasions a member of staff or student might injure themselves in such a way that it is possible your blood might enter their body. This usually happens when the student/staff member accidentally pricks themselves with a needle or dental instrument.

While there is no risk to you, this is obviously distressing for the student/staff member and so the Dental Hospital has a specific policy to help them deal with it.

Why is this relevant to me?

The student or member of staff who was looking after you had an accident and was injured by equipment contaminated with your blood. You were probably unaware that this accident happened and it was not your fault.

What we need to ask you?

Because you were the 'source' patient (the patient being cared for when the injury happened) we need to ask if you will consent to having blood taken to test for infections that can be passed on to the member of staff. You are in no way being singled out, and the chance of you having any of these infections in your blood is extremely small.

Would all patients be asked to have these blood tests?

Yes. Whenever a patient is the 'source' of such an injury they are asked to have these blood tests. These blood tests are a standard procedure that has been recommended by the Department of Health and the NHS.

Can I talk to someone about the test?

Yes. A senior member of staff will answer any questions you may have.

Below are some of the questions that patients often ask.

What will the blood test involve?

A senior member of staff caring for you will ask for your permission to test your blood for three viruses that can be found in blood (these are the same viruses that are tested for when people donate blood):

- Hepatitis B virus
- Hepatitis C virus
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

They will ask you some questions (similar to those asked at Blood Donation Centres). The answers provide us with information about risk factors associated with contracting (getting) these viruses.

Can I refuse to have the blood test?

Yes. You can choose not to give permission for the blood test. Refusing to have the blood test will not affect your treatment or future health care in any way.

Will I get to know the results of the test?

Yes. You will be given an appointment to get your results from a senior member of dental hospital staff as soon after your test as possible (the same day or usually the next working day).

What happens if the blood test is negative?

If the test results are negative, that will be the end of the matter as the information will remain confidential and will not be passed on to your family doctor (GP) or anyone else.

What happens if the blood test is positive?

If the tests shows infection with one of these viruses we will arrange, with your permission, an appointment with our Infectious Diseases doctors who will offer advice, information and support about the infection and how it might affect you and whether treatment is required. In many cases there are effective ways of treating these infections. They will also give you information about any support organisations available.

Will I have to tell insurance companies that I have had these tests?

No. Insurance companies should not ask if you have had a HIV or Hepatitis B or C test, had counselling in connection with a test or received a negative test result. Doctors should not reveal this information when writing reports and insurance companies will not expect this information to be provided. Insurers may ask only whether someone has had a positive test result, is awaiting a test result or is receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis B or C.

There may be other questions that you want to ask, if so you can use the space below to make a note of them.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

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