LABORATORY SAFETY INFORMATION SHEET 4
WORKING WITH HUMAN BODY FLUIDS

Blood, urine, saliva, faeces and other body substances **MUST** be treated as potential sources of Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, and other microbiological infections. Every care must be taken to avoid contamination by these types of specimens by strict adherence to laboratory rules, written guidelines and precautions.

**PRECAUTIONS**

1. Students are permitted to only work with their own blood and body substances or with specimens specifically obtained for experiments from the Blood Bank or hospitals and which have been tested for Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS.

2. Staff and students must understand the hazards of working with human body fluids and substances, and that **updated** correct techniques and handling procedures are thoroughly explained and **demonstrated** to all by experienced laboratory staff.

3. Staff and students must be familiar with the Sharps Injury Protocol.

4. Staff and students must be advised that Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended prior to working with human body substances.

5. Plastic aprons, disposable gloves (of correct size), and safety glasses must be worn when handling body fluids. These items are supplied by the School for each laboratory class.

6. **All pipetting procedures must be done by hand. Mouth-pipetting techniques MUST NOT be used.**

7. Where experiments are being carried out on a common specimen of blood, the specimen must be first collected in the tube(S) containing anticoagulant. The tube(s) must then be safely secured in a rack and then individual samples withdrawn from the common sample(s).

8. Where disposable needle/syringe units are used, the whole unit must be discarded directly into a sharps container. No attempt should be made to separate the needle from the syringe before discarding. (Refer to Faculty Sharps Policy for further information.)

9. Lancets must only be used once and then immediately discarded into a sharps container. **Used Lancets must not be used by other staff or students.** Used lancets must not be left on trays, benches, sinks, etc. Use forceps or tongs and a try to transport improperly discarded lancets, needles, and other similar sharps to the sharps bin.

10. Microscope slides used for blood and other body fluid smears, wet preparations, groupings, agglutinations, osmosis studies, etc. must be discarded in a sharps container immediately after completion of that part of the experiment.

11. Contaminated cotton wool swabs, orange sticks, alcowipes, and tissues should be placed in a biohazard waste bin.

Continued over page….
WORKING WITH HUMAN BODY FLUIDS

PRECAUTIONS (cont’d)

12. Contaminated haemometers, haemocytometers, and other types of cytometers and associated pipettes must be soaked in warm water with detergent or in a proteolytic enzyme cleaner prior to being soaked in disinfectant, or in a disinfectant-detergent agent. Broad spectrum disinfectant and detergent agents such as Biogram alleviate the need for two-stage soaking, and contaminated equipment and instruments that are made of phenol-resistant materials can be readily soaked in these solutions. (Refer to Faculty Infection Control Manual for choice of disinfectant.)

13. Benches must be wiped over with a suitable disinfectant such as Sodium Hypochlorite solution (1000ppm. conc.) or with 70% alcohol immediately after completion of work. (Refer to Spills Management section of the Faculty Infection Control Manual for cleaning of benches and other surfaces following spills and incidents involving large area contamination.)

INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WHO MAY BECOME EXPOSED TO BODY FLUIDS

If you (or any of your colleagues) become exposed to body fluids, then the following procedure must be followed:

Immediate Action:

• If skin is penetrated, wash the area well with soap and water (alcohol-based hand rinses or foams containing 60-90% alcohol by weight should be used when water is not available).

• If blood, other body fluids or substances gets on the skin, irrespective of whether there are cuts or abrasions, wash well with soap and water.

• If eyes are contaminated, rinse the area gently but thoroughly with water (using either the bottles at the safety eye stations or tap water) or normal saline, while the eyes are open.

• If blood, other body fluids or substances get into mouth, spit out and rinse the mouth with water several times.

Then:

• Immediately report incident to supervisor, OS&H Representative or OS&H Office.

• Complete and submit Accident Form.

• Regardless of the status of the source of the specimen, the affected person should immediately be evaluated and risk-assessed by a trained health care worker or physician.