

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Policy

The hospital operates a post-exposure prophylaxis policy (attached) for needle-sick injuries. No distinction is made between Khmer and expatriate volunteers.

If you sustain a needle-stick injury, please wash thoroughly as outlined in the policy. The on-call/ duty doctor or employee health doctor will take a history and examine the wound.

This doctor will ask a trained HIV counselor to provide pre- and post-test counselling to the caretaker of the patient involved in the incident. **An HIV antibody test will be performed on the patient only if the caretaker has given consent after counseling.** If the patient is less than 18 months of age or still being breastfed, HIV testing with pre- and post-test counselling will be performed on the mother if she is available. This procedure will be undertaken as rapidly as possible and you are asked to refrain from intervening in any way. The HIV counsellors also work full-time as doctors and nurses in the out-patient, in-patient, radiology, ophthalmology and emergency departments, home care team (so that they may be out of the area at the time of the incident) and HIV clinic (which sees almost 300 children per month). They all understand your anxiety and the importance of speed in this situation. Evidence shows that post-exposure prophylaxis must be started within 24-36 hours of the exposure in order to be effective.

The doctor will arrange for the HIV counsellor to meet with you if you require HIV testing for yourself. As a matter of hospital policy, pre- and post-test counselling will be provided. We can also provide hepatitis B and C serology testing.

If required, you will be prescribed antiretroviral drugs as outlined in the policy.

If you do not agree with this policy, we suggest you bring your own antiretroviral drugs for self-administration in the event of an injury.

HIV and Hepatitis B and C are all prevalent in Cambodia. We urge you to adopt universal precautions at all times. Gloves are available in all departments and should be worn for invasive procedures. Please ensure that your hepatitis B vaccination status is up-to-date before your arrival at AHC. Currently AHC has no treatment options for hepatitis B and C.

If you do sustain a needle-stick injury, please remember that the child is not to blame and has the same rights as any child in your home country.