

PURPOSE

New York Institute of Technology is committed to providing all workers with a safe and healthy work environment. The purpose of the Communicable Disease Exposure Control Plan is to outline the infection control practices that will be implemented at The New York Institute of Technology in the event of an infectious communicable disease outbreak.

NYIT is committed to complying with the requirements of WorkSafeBC’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 5.54 and 6.3. All workers must follow the procedures outlined in this plan to prevent and reduce exposure to communicable diseases. Through a combination of preventative measures and effective control technologies, the Institute will minimize its exposure to viruses. This will be established and communicated to the Institute’s community through safe work procedures, training, and awareness campaigns. The Institute will follow direction and controls as specified by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), the Ministry of Health, and the Provincial or Vancouver Coastal Health.

SCOPE

The Exposure Control Plan applies to all staff, faculty, contractors and subcontractors working for or on behalf of The New York Institute of Technology (“NYIT” or “the Institute”). For the purpose of this document, any person working in the employ of NYIT will be referred to as “Worker”.

DEFINITIONS

Infectious diseases are broadly categorized into three groups based on their routes of transmission: bloodborne, contact and airborne.

Bloodborne Infectious Diseases

Bloodborne infectious diseases, such as HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, are transmitted through contact with infected blood or body fluids. In order for exposure to these pathogens to result in infection, the blood or body fluid containing the virus must gain entry into the bloodstream. Employees and students are at risk of exposure to bloodborne pathogens from sharps injuries or splashes to their mucous membranes.

Airborne Infectious Diseases

Airborne infectious diseases, such as Influenza, Whooping cough, Tuberculosis, Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, and COVID19 are spread through the air in large respiratory droplets (droplet transmission) and in aerosolized airborne droplets (airborne transmission).

Contact Infectious Diseases

Contact infectious diseases, such as Norovirus, Hepatitis A and Clostridium difficile, are transmitted through direct contact or indirect contact with bacteria or viruses. The Infectious Disease Exposure Control Plan focuses on controlling exposure to contact and airborne infectious diseases in the event of an outbreak.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Deans and Department Heads:

Deans and Department Heads are responsible for

- ensuring the Communicable Disease Exposure Control Plan (Plan) is implemented in all departments/facilities under their authority.
- Monitoring compliance with the Plan within their areas of responsibility
- and recommending measures for improvement, if necessary.

Faculty, Staff and Students:

All faculty, staff and students have the following responsibilities:

- Understand the Plan and follow the procedures outlined in the plan to protect against exposure to infectious agents in the workplace.
- Attend education and training sessions.
- Engage in frequent handwashing and follow cough etiquette
- Daily self-administered health checks will be a personal responsibility. Students, faculty, staff and campus visitors are not required to confirm that they have completed the health self-assessment prior to accessing campus. Individuals experiencing symptoms should stay home, consult the B.C. COVID-19 self-assessment tool to determine if COVID-19 testing is needed, and contact 811 or their healthcare provider for medical advice as necessary.
- Stay home when sick
- Report exposure incidents to your supervisors/instructors

INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES

Cough Etiquette

All faculty, staff and students at NYIT are expected to follow the cough/sneeze etiquette, which includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in the garbage.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to the eyes, mouth, nose and to common surfaces.

					
1. Press hands palm to palm	2. Press each palm over back of opposing hand	3. Interlace fingers, palm to palm	4. Interlock fingers	5. Rotate each thumb in palm	6. Rotate fingertips in palm

WorkSafeBC: Controlling Exposure – Protecting Workers from Infectious Diseases

Soap and warm running water should be used and hands should be washed for 20-30 seconds. If water is unavailable, hand sanitizers can be used but only if the hands are not visibly soiled. Hands should be dried with a single-use towel and the faucet turned off without re-contaminating the hands.

Hands should be washed:

- Before leaving a work area
- After handling materials that may be contaminated
- Before and after direct contact with an infected individual
- After removing gloves and other PPE
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses or applying makeup.

Cleaning and Environmental Decontamination

During an infectious disease outbreak, increased cleaning of shared workstations and equipment, including computer labs, and surfaces which are frequently touched (e.g., handrails, door knobs) will be implemented. The cleaning staff will be responsible for the increased cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in common spaces, including washrooms and classrooms. Cleaning of surfaces and equipment in labs and offices remains the responsibility of the occupants of those spaces. The cleaning staff will also ensure that all washrooms are equipped with soap and paper towels and hand sanitizer dispensers are replenished.

Vaccination

Getting your yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself, your family and people at high risk of complications from the flu. It will help:

- protect your community
- reduce the burden on Canada's health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic

The flu shot will not protect against COVID-19, but it will help reduce your risk of getting the flu and COVID-19 at the same time. Having both illnesses at the same time could put you at a higher risk for severe complications.

Getting the flu shot will not increase your risk of illness from COVID-19. Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to protect our families, communities and ourselves against COVID-19. Evidence indicates that vaccines are effective at preventing serious outcomes, such as severe illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19.

Most COVID-19 vaccines require 2 doses to be fully vaccinated. While current evidence shows good effectiveness after 1 dose, a second dose is essential for longer-lasting and optimal protection. For your second dose, return at the time advised by your healthcare provider.

Protocol for Escalation of Infection Control Measures

The decision to implement the infection control procedures outlined in this plan will be made by the Campus Dean and Associate Campus Dean in consultation with the Business Administration Manager and/or the Director of Student Affairs and will be based on the following criteria:

- Severity of illness associated with the infectious agent;
- Routes and ease of transmission;
- Number of infected persons in the general population and at NYIT;
- Pandemic phase as identified by the Public Health Office and the BC Centre for Disease Control;
- Direction provided by the BCCDC and provincial health authorities.

Health Monitoring

The Business Administration Manager will monitor the progression of all infectious disease outbreaks that have the potential to impact NYIT faculty, staff and students. The Manager and/or Director of Student Affairs will communicate with the provincial Health Authorities, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the provincial Ministry of Health on a regular basis to monitor the spread and impact of the outbreak. Regular updates will be coordinated and provided to the NYIT community.

In addition, NYIT faculty, staff and students should monitor each other for possible symptoms related to the infectious disease outbreak. If an individual develops symptoms, they will be referred to the appropriate medical authority. Faculty and staff should continue to report illness as they usually do. Absences should be reported to supervisors in accordance with normal sick leave protocol. Students should report illness to their instructors and request a modification or accommodation if needed from the Director of Student Affairs.

Documentation

A record of all training and education provided to faculty, staff and students will be maintained in the Administration office. In addition, NYIT will maintain a record of all workers who have been exposed, or are suspected to have been exposed, to an infectious agent while performing their work activities.