

The 5 W's of USP <800> Education for the Entire Patient Care Team

While preparation and administration of hazardous drugs presents the most frequent risk of exposure, other members of the patient care team, through direct or indirect interaction, should also be considered in any training and competency program.

For many small and rural hospitals, the pharmacy will be taking the lead on education and needs to ensure all staff are included.

WHO needs to be considered?
Any care team member who might have direct or indirect patient contact. This includes nurses, physicians, advanced practice providers, nurse assistants, medical assistants, therapy staff, phlebotomists, dietary personnel, transport personnel, and environmental services personnel involved in the routine cleaning of patient rooms or handling of soiled linens. Other team members, like those in supply receiving departments or health technology maintenance/biomedical engineering, may not have patient interactions but could interact with hazardous materials.
Education for a patient's family and visitors should also be provided.
WHAT are the risks to these groups?
OSHA notes several areas of concern for exposure outside of direct medication preparation and administration. Exposure can occur from needle sticks, body fluids (urine, feces, sweat, or emesis), or contaminated surfaces, linens, or clothing.
WHEN should these groups be educated?
Education should be provided with new employee orientation materials, with annual competencies, and in real time.
WHERE should this education be provided?
Active and passive education tools should be utilized. Possible formats can include alerts in the electronic medical record, automated dispensing cabinets, and smart pumps. Visible signage should be on display outside patient rooms. Ancillary labeling should appear on patient medication labels. Online modules can be used during orientation and for annual competencies. Hazardous drug handling should be included in skills fairs. Discharge paperwork should include instructions for the patient and family members on hazardous exposures at the next level of care.
WHY is this important?
Employees may not be aware of the potential for hazardous medication exposures. They should have basic knowledge to protect themselves from these risks.

Additional Resources:

[ASHP Guidelines on Handling Hazardous Drugs](#)
[Hazardous Drugs - Overview | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)
[ISOPP Standards for the Safe Handling of Cytotoxics](#)
[Managing Hazardous Drug Exposures: Information for Healthcare Settings \(cdc.gov\)](#)
[Chemotherapy Safety | American Cancer Society](#)

Developed by members of the Section Advisory Group
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