Tips about your health and working with animals

The PI or Animal Facility Manager must provide training to personnel on all hazards associated with the tasks being performed on the protocol. Safety Management and other entities on campus may assist with the training.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff and lab personnel in animal facilities are required to wear PPE while at work.

PPE should be changed as appropriate to minimize cross contamination between species or activities in different animal rooms within the facility. Questions concerning the required PPE should be directed to the animal facility supervisors and the Principal Investigator of the lab. Personal Protective Equipment needs to be tailored to the exposure of hazardous materials as well as diseases, and to the limitations of the PPE itself.

Personal Hygiene

One of the most effective methods to reduce the potential of exposure to infectious material is handwashing. You should be washing your hands as frequently as possible when working with animals or other hazardous materials.

Eating and drinking is not allowed in animal facilities, labs where animals are housed or where hazardous agents are utilized.

Zoonotic Diseases

Diseases which are transmitted from animals to man (zoonotic diseases) can have significant health consequences for personnel.

Risks can be minimized by:

- using proper engineering controls to isolate exposures to personnel (glove box, negative air enclosure, fume hood, etc.)
- using appropriate handling techniques when working with animals, their tissues, and caging
- wearing appropriate PPE and masks for the tasks and species you are working with
- utilizing appropriate personal hygiene practices such as frequent handwashing
- following proper disposal of needles, scalpels, glassware

Special Health Concerns when working with Animals
You must be medically evaluated for working with animals initially and annually thereafter.

**Animal Allergies:** Allergies to laboratory animals can become a concern and can affect anyone who works with animals. If you think you might be experiencing allergic symptoms due to your work with animals (including sneezing, runny nose, watery eyes, hives, or wheezing), contact Cutler Health Center or your primary care physician to arrange for an evaluation.

Respirators and other masks may help prevent the development of allergies; the proper use/fitting for this PPE should be discussed with Cutler Health Center. You must not wear a respirator for a job without a clearance, pulmonary function and fit test. If you voluntarily use a respirator, you must fill out a disclosure form.

**Immune deficiency/Illness:** Special precautions may be needed while working with animals if your immune system is weakened due to disease or medication use. You should speak with your primary care physician or Cutler Health Center as soon as possible should this apply to you.

**Pregnancy:** Special precautions may be needed while working with animals if you plan on becoming pregnant or are pregnant. You should speak with your primary care physician or Cutler Health Center as soon as possible should this apply to you.

**Accidents, Injury or Illness**

Should you have a non-emergency accident related to working with animals during regular business hours you should seek treatment at Cutler Health Services or through your medical provider.

Individuals who experience an accident, injury or illness related to working with animals must:

Report the event to your supervisor or Principal Investigator (PI) and complete an Incident Report Form. The form can be found [here](#).