

EH&S Fast Facts

CHEMICAL & RADIOLOGICAL REPRODUCTIVE HAZARDS



Substances or agents that affect reproductive health or the ability of couples to have healthy children are called “reproductive hazards.” Employees are encouraged to tell supervisors as soon as possible they are pregnant. Supervisors are responsible for determining if substances used in the work area create a known risk of reproductive hazard, for discussing properties of materials with all employees, and for establishing standards for appropriate handling and protective measures for the type of work. Many toxic and radioactive materials can be used safely before and during pregnancy if handled properly.

Chemicals Requiring Evaluation of Work Practices by EH&S

- ✦ Antineoplastic (chemotherapy) drugs
- ✦ Experimental drugs
- ✦ Carcinogens, Class II or III
- ✦ Heavy metals and their compounds (e.g. mercury, methyl mercury)
- ✦ Anesthetic gases

Ionizing Radiation

- ✦ Employees should consider the hazards associated with radiation risk to the embryo/ fetus
- ✦ A pregnant radiation user has the right to declare her pregnancy (in writing with the estimated date of conception) and thereby impose lower dose limits for the embryo/ fetus

Safe Practices

These materials include metals, anesthetic gases, pesticides, industrial solvents, manufacturing chemicals and lab reagents. If you work with chemicals or radioactive materials:

- ✦ Don't eat, drink, smoke, chew gum, apply cosmetics... in the lab
- ✦ Review MSDSs to become familiar with any reproductive hazards presented by chemicals
- ✦ Use personal protective equipment (gloves, respirators, a buttoned lab coat with the sleeves down - fasten sleeves inside the gloves with rubber bands if you can) to reduce exposures
- ✦ Avoid skin contact, wear two pairs of gloves whenever possible, change gloves often and anytime they tear
- ✦ Store chemicals in sealed containers when not in use
- ✦ Wash hands after contact with hazardous materials and before eating, drinking, or smoking
- ✦ If chemicals contact the skin, wash with soap and water
- ✦ Participate in all safety and health education, training and monitoring programs offered by employer
- ✦ If you must handle an open container of a volatile chemical, do so in the fume hood, make sure it's working properly (sashes in place, flow monitor is working, certification is current)
- ✦ Avoid taking contaminated clothing or other objects home - store street clothes in a separate area and wash work clothing separately from other laundry (at work if possible)
- ✦ Chemical exposures are not limited to the lab, other potential sources of chemical exposures are art materials (paints, solvents, glazes), cleaning materials, paints and automotive products

You may contact your EH&S Safety Advisor at 827-5528 before starting your family to have your workplace evaluated. Visit www.ehs.ucr.edu for additional information.