

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH RESEARCH ANIMAL EXPOSURE

INTRODUCTION



Many research programs at UC Riverside (UCR) use animals to study behavior, disease processes and treatments, and to better understand immunological and microbial interactions. The majority of animals at UCR are rodents, but other research animals may be present including birds, fish, chickens, snakes, and other vertebrates.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

- The most common risk is development or worsening of **allergies** to animals or **occupational asthma** as a result of exposure to animal allergens.
- Transmission of infectious diseases from an animal to a human (lab acquired or zoonosis).
- Individuals who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant and those with a compromised immune system may be at increased risk if they are exposed to infectious agents or reproductive disruptors.

WHAT IS THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM (OHP)?

UCR's Occupational Health Program is administered through the Office of Research Compliance and Environmental Health & Safety.

The program includes initial enrollment and general education for personnel with direct contact to research animals, health history screening, routine and special immunizations, health surveillance, and, if necessary, enrollment in the Respiratory Protection Program.

WHO MUST ENROLL AND PARTICIPATE IN THE OHP?

All faculty, staff, students, and affiliates who have direct contact with animals or animal waste are required to participate and be enrolled in the OHP.

Direct contact is defined as handling animals, tissues, and/or animal waste or performing procedures on animals.

WHO MAY VOLUNTARILY ENROLL AND PARTICIPATE IN THE OHP?

Individuals who have no direct contact with research animals but may have indirect contact or infrequent

exposure to research animals at work are encouraged to participate.

Indirect contact is defined as being in the same room or area where animals are housed or present for research purposes or where animal waste is handled or stored. Individuals do not directly touch or handle animals or animal waste.

HOW TO ENROLL AND PARTICIPATE IN THE OHP?

Individuals with direct contact to research animals are identified through job roles and responsibilities or are listed in Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) as reviewed by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Identified individuals must submit a completed Health Questionnaire that is reviewed by an Occupational Health provider at UC Irvine at initial enrollment and periodically as determined by the physician. IACUC or EH&S may also specify specific review periods based on risk assessment of the exposure risk(s). Individuals are encouraged to update and re-submit the Health Questionnaire at any time if there is a change in their personal health status (e.g. pregnancy, illness, immunodeficiency, etc.).

Individuals with indirect contact or infrequent exposure can also voluntarily submit a completed Health Questionnaire for review.

Individuals requiring routine or special immunizations or respiratory protection are referred to EH&S which administers these programs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with Animal Use Protocols, amendments, training requirements, and animal use activities:

iacuc@ucr.edu
951-827-4813

For assistance with immunizations, and Health Questionnaire issues:

ehsocchealth@ucr.edu
951-827-5528

For assistance with respiratory protection:

ehsih@ucr.edu
951-827-5528