

**Subject:** Veterinary Student Pregnancy Risk Management Policy

**Policy No.**

**Applicable to:** *Students*

**Pages:** 5

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**POLICY:**

Veterinary students are potentially exposed to materials or incidents that may result in human injury. Some of these exposures could potentially affect pregnant women or their unborn child. Possible exposures may include infectious agents, drugs, chemicals, inhaled anesthetics, radiation, and other agents. The University of Minnesota will strive to provide equal opportunity for all students who are academically qualified and to ensure that all students are accommodated. It is the responsibility of the pregnant student to initiate requests for accommodation and to help arrange these accommodations.

**PROCEDURE:**

Students who are pregnant or who are actively trying to become pregnant should:

A. Consult with their individual instructors regarding types of hazards to which the student may be exposed. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety (612-626-6002, [dehs@umn.edu](mailto:dehs@umn.edu)) or the Office of Occupational Health and Safety (612-626-5008, [uohs@umn.edu](mailto:uohs@umn.edu)) may also be consulted for further information. Examples of possible reproductive hazards are listed in Appendix A.

B. Contact their treating physician immediately to obtain recommendations for a plan to minimize exposure to hazards with the possibility of reproductive effects to which they may be exposed. The Office of Occupational Health and Safety may also be contacted to obtain further information.

1. If accommodations, work restrictions, or class schedule changes are recommended, contact the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Veterinary Medicine as early as possible so steps may be taken to assist the student in conforming to a plan developed by her physicians. The student will be asked to provide a copy of the specific restrictions or accommodations requested by her physician or the Office of Occupational Health and Safety.

Options for the Student:

1. Continue as a student with no schedule or assignment changes if no significant reproductive hazardous exposures are anticipated
2. Continue as a student with some schedule and assignment changes to minimize certain potential exposures. The flexibility of scheduled changes under this option

is dependent on the scheduled assignments and the willingness of classmates to exchange assignments with the affected student.

3. Leave of absence for a time period deemed necessary by her physician. The student would be responsible for making up assignments or courses missed during the leave of absence.
4. Withdrawal as a student. The student may then request readmission into the next class. In years 1-3 this could mean a student would need to be on leave for one full year as the classes are lock stepped.

### Rights and Responsibility

It is recognized that a pregnant woman or women actively seeking to become pregnant have rights and the responsibility for decisions concerning the pregnancy. No one acting on behalf of the College of Veterinary Medicine may discriminate against a student on the basis of pregnancy. The woman should expect due consideration from everyone associated with her pregnancy whatever her decision may be.

At the same time, the pregnant student is expected to complete each and every requirement of the veterinary curriculum by a schedule or plan that can be reasonably implemented and under which risks are deemed acceptable by her and her physician.

**Note:** Appendix A includes some examples of possible hazards to a pregnant woman but is not an all inclusive list.

## Appendix A: Possible Reproductive Hazards for Pregnant Women in Laboratory Settings

Some examples of agents that may pose a possible reproductive hazard in pregnant students are listed below. This Appendix includes possible examples of reproductive hazards but is not an all inclusive list. Further information may be obtained from some of the sources listed below. However, the actual hazard or risk to the pregnant woman depends on the type of exposure, route of exposure, length of exposure, use of personal protective equipment, underlying medical conditions, and other factors.

### Chemicals

Alkylating agents	Mitomycin
Antineoplastic agents	Nitrous oxide
Anesthetic gases- particularly if unscavenged such as	Organic mercury
Isoflurane, enflurane,	Pencilliamine
nitrous oxide	Pesticides
Azathioprine	Polychlorinated and polybrominated biphenyls
Busulfan	Retinoic acid
Cadmium	Ribavirin
Carbon disulfide	Tamoxifen
Carbon monoxide	Thalidomide
Chemotherapy agents	Toluene
Chlordecone	Toxaphene
Chlorobiphenyls	Vincristine
Cyclophosphamide	Xylene
Cyclosporine	Zidovudine
Cytosin	
Diethylstilbesterol	
Dimethyl sulfoxide	
Estradiol	
Estrogen	
Ethylene oxide	
Etretinate	
Formaldehyde	
Fluorouracil	
Ganciclovir	
Halogenated hydrocarbons	
Hexachlorobenzene	
Hexachlor	
Iodoacetic acid	
Isotretinoin	
Lead	
Medroxyprogesterone	
Methotrexate	

### Physical Hazards

Ionizing radiation  
Extreme heat  
Physical Injury/Trauma  
    Lifting, being kicked,  
    being cut

### Infectious agents – includes but is not all inclusive:

Borrelia  
Coxiella burnetii (Q fever)  
Cytomegalovirus  
Arena virus (hemorrhagic fever, Lassa Fever)  
HIV virus  
Herpes simplex virus  
Listeria monocytogenes

Parvovirus  
Pasteurella multocida  
Rubella- if woman does not have positive  
antibody titer  
Treponema pallidum

Toxoplasma gondii- if woman does not  
have positive antibody titer  
Vaccinia  
Varicella zoster

**Potential sources for information on reproductive hazards:****Computer Databases/web-based resources**

National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety: The Effects of Workplace Hazards on Female Reproductive Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-104/>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Safety and Health Topics: Reproductive Hazards

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/reproductivehazards/index.html>

OTIS: Organization of Teratology Information Specialists

<http://otispregnancy.org/>

National Birth Defects Prevention Network

<http://www.nbdpn.org>

TERIS – Teratogen Information System, Seattle, WA

<http://depts.washington.edu/~terisweb/teris/>

Developmental and Reproductive Toxicology Database (DART), National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/factsheets/dartfs.html>

Reproductive risk, National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, MD

[www.micromedex.com/products/reprorisk/](http://www.micromedex.com/products/reprorisk/)

REPROTOX- Reproductive Toxicology Center, Washington DC

[www.reprotox.org](http://www.reprotox.org)

202/293-5946

**Government Agencies**

1. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC Regional Offices
2. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
3. Occupational Safety and Health Administration
4. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

**Phone Numbers**

Hennepin Regional Poison Center: 612-222-1222

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The North American Teratology Information Service located in Toronto can provide information (telephone: 1 416 813 6978).

### **Textbooks**

Frazier LM, Hage ML. Reproductive Hazards of the Workplace. 1998. John Wiley & Sons. New York.

Jennison, Elizabeth A. Reproductive Hazards in the Workplace in: Handbook of Chemical Health and Safety. 2001. Ed. Robert J. Alaimo. Washington, D. C.: Oxford, 2001.

### **Articles**

Zhu JL, Knudsen LE, Andersen A-M N et al. Laboratory work and pregnancy outcome: a study within the National Birth Cohort in Denmark. *Occup Environ Med* 2006; 63: 53-58.

McDiarmid, MA, Gehle K. Preconception Brief: Occupational/Environmental Exposures. *Matern Child Health J* 2006; 10: S123-S128.

Wennberg H, Magnusson LL, Bonde JP et al. Congenital malformations related to maternal exposure to specific agents in biomedical research laboratories. *J Occup Environ Med* 2005; 47: 11-9

Kumar S. Occupational Exposure Associated with Reproductive Dysfunction. *J Occup Health* 2004; 46: 1-19.

Wennberg H, Bonde JP, Stenbeck M et al. Adverse reproductive outcomes among employees working in biomedical research laboratories. *Scan J Work Environ Health* 2002; 28:5-11.

Wennberg H, Bodin L, Vainio H et al. Pregnancy outcome of personnel in Swedish biomedical research laboratories. *J Occup Environ Med* 2000; 42: 438-46.

Frazier LM. Workplace Reproductive Problems. *Occ Env Med* 2000; 27(4): 1039-1055.