

What is required for skin surveillance?

- Completed questionnaire (discussed during your appointment)
- Skin assessment – visual inspection of hands, lower arms, face and neck.

Any other areas of skin concerns will be discussed without visual inspection.



Make yourself familiar with the hazards in your workplace and what effect, if any, they might have on your skin. Find out about the skin care facilities in your area e.g. is there an accepted skin care regime and/or products, is there a selection of gloves. Become familiar with the signs and symptoms of skin irritation and/or disease.

Look for:

- Dryness
- Itching
- Redness
- Cracking
- Flaking
- Scaling
- Bleeding
- Swelling
- Blistering

Do these symptoms get better when you are on your days off or at weekends or holidays? If you experience any of these symptoms, report it!

What happens next? - Outcomes

- You will be informed of your results verbally at the time of your appointment and advised when you require recall or further follow up. You will be asked to sign the questionnaire to acknowledge understanding of the results and receipt of information.
- Your manager and local safety adviser will be notified of your fitness to undertake further exposure also indicating any actions required, recommendations and your statutory recall interval. This notification should be kept in your local CoSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) health record.

Further Information can be found at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/health-safety/occupational-health/staff/health-surveillance>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eh76.pdf>



Health surveillance is important for:

- detecting ill-health effects at an early stage, so your employers can introduce better controls to prevent them getting worse
- enabling you to raise concerns about how work affects your health
- providing data to help your employers evaluate health risks
- highlighting lapses in workplace control measures, therefore providing invaluable feedback to the risk assessment
- providing an opportunity to reinforce training and education of staff and students (e.g. on the impact of health effects and the use of protective equipment)

NOTE: Health Surveillance is **compulsory**.

If you fail to attend for surveillance, your access to animal house facilities will be reviewed. To avoid problems please attend any scheduled appointment or contact OHS to discuss rescheduling within your recommended recall.

OHK1 2019

Occupational Health Service



Information for Staff and Student Animal Workers

Please read **prior** to your appointment to ensure health surveillance is informative and useful.

You are advised that all required control measures, identified in your Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (2002) Regulations (as amended) (COSHH) risk assessment e.g. RPE (respiratory protective equipment) must be utilised at all times of exposure. Any queries should be discussed, in the first instance with your local safety adviser (or Occupational Hygiene Unit for respirator face-fit testing and guidance on wearing of respirators).

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Laboratory Animal Allergens

Laboratory animal allergy is an allergic response which may develop as a result of exposure to animal allergens.

Why is animal allergy such a problem?

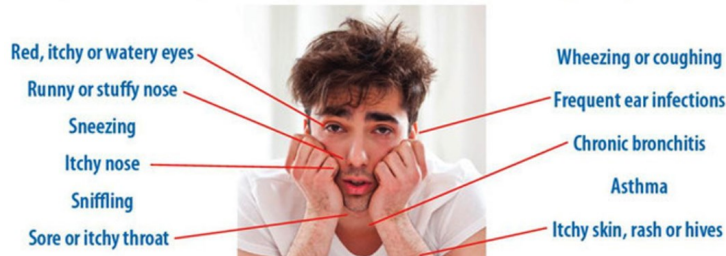
Up to a quarter of people who regularly work with small mammals and insects (and as a result come into contact with proteins secreted in their urine, dander, or excreta) develop allergic response. This can cause annoying symptoms such as an itchy nose or watering eyes - but also asthma can occur. **All** persons working with and exposed to laboratory animals are at risk, even if allergy has never been a problem before.

How does an allergy develop?

You can be exposed to allergenic material both by direct contact with the animals and/or the soiled bedding and cage materials or by airborne exposure - tiny particles of soiled bedding; skin and droplets of urine – aeroallergens – get thrown up and can remain suspended in the air. These may then be inhaled or can settle on exposed skin and clothing. Skin contamination with allergenic material is inevitable hence the correct protective clothing is being worn. Contamination can occur during changing of clothes.

In some people, allergens absorbed across the lining of the lung, or through the skin (particularly damaged skin) can stimulate the immune system to produce antibodies that trigger an allergic reaction when you are next exposed to that allergen - even at very low levels. What may seem to be 'low risk' work of only an hour per month can cause issue, if during that time, your exposure to allergens is not controlled—refer to local risk assessment for advice on control measures.

Allergy Symptoms



Eye, nasal and most skin symptoms tend to occur during work exposure. Asthma symptoms may not occur until some hours after exposure e.g., coughing at night. If you experience any of these symptoms, report it!

Statutory Health Surveillance

Whilst you are working with animals the Occupational Health Service (OHS) will regularly monitor your health by means of respiratory and skin surveillance. This should be before at the start of your work with animals and then 6 weeks later, followed by a 3 month review. Thereafter this will be by an annual surveillance unless otherwise indicated by OHS.

If you think you may have developed symptoms of animal allergy you must report this to your local manager, Health and Safety contact, and OHS as soon as you become aware of symptoms. Don't wait for your next health surveillance appointment before reporting it. OHS will then arrange a confidential assessment to establish if you have become sensitised and advise on any additional precautions necessary to enable you to safely continue with your work. The earlier you report symptoms, the easier it is to prevent allergies progressing.

What is required for respiratory surveillance?

- Completed questionnaire (discussed during your appointment— covering previous medical history / medications / type of work carried out)
- Spirometry—Spirometry is a test used to accurately measure the amount of air you can breathe in and out of your lungs and how fast you can breathe that air out.

It is a painless procedure but it will require you to breathe as hard as you can which can make you breathless.



What will I be asked to do?

For OHS to get the most out of your test you will be asked to:

- Breathe in until you have filled your lungs with air and cannot take any more in
- Put the mouthpiece into your mouth – far enough to avoid blocking it with your tongue or your teeth
- Make a good seal with your lips around the mouthpiece so that air does not escape around the edges
- You may be asked to wear a nose clip on your nose to prevent air escaping down your nose during some of the tests. These nose clips are not uncomfortable
- Breathe out into the spirometer, completely emptying your lungs and squeezing out every last drop of air
- You will be asked to do this several times. You will be asked to breathe out slowly and completely in a relaxed way and you will also be asked to blow out as hard as you can and as fast as you can.
- When you are asked to blow out as hard as you can it is essential that you put as much effort in to this as possible to ensure accuracy of the measurements
- Whatever tests you are asked to do you will be instructed fully and given encouragement. You will also be able to rest between tests

Please inform the OH Technician / Adviser at your appointment if you have had any of the following:

- Recent chest infection requiring antibiotics or steroids
- Heart attack in the last 3 months
- Recent eye or abdominal surgery
- Unstable angina
- Perforated ear drum or ear infection
- Coughing up blood
- Thoracic, abdominal or aortic aneurism
- Recent Stroke
- Pregnancy
- Currently experiencing pain

The following list of 'dos and don'ts' will help us to ensure we are obtaining the most accurate information from your spirometry test.

DO

- Complete an updated questionnaire before your appointment
- Wear loose and comfortable clothing that does not restrict or interfere with your breathing
- Arrive in plenty of time for your appointment so that you are relaxed and have time to visit the toilet before your test
- Ensure you remove any loose fitting dentures

DON'T

- Eat a big meal within 2 hours of the start of your appointment
- Smoke within the hour before the start of the test
- Drink alcohol within 4 hours prior to the appointment
- Take any vigorous exercise within 30 minutes of the start of the test
- Ignore the requirement to take the test