

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 04-009	
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GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH LABORATORY CHEMICALS THAT ARE REPRODUCTIVE HAZARDS

Certain laboratory chemicals have the potential to harm the reproductive systems of men and women, or to affect a developing fetus if used improperly. Since most chemicals have not yet been evaluated for their reproductive effects, the following guidelines were developed.

1. Engineered exhaust ventilation systems, such as chemical fume hoods or exhausted biological safety cabinets can provide a primary exposure control measure by keeping chemical, biological or radiological agents out of an employee's breathing zone. Researchers, especially those who are pregnant or of childbearing age, should always utilize these engineering controls when working with hazardous materials. If properly designed and correctly utilized to contain the hazardous materials, this ventilation/control equipment will prevent exposures to hazardous substances.
2. Consult Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs), Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), the Principal Investigator and your laboratory supervisor to determine what chemicals or other agents used in your laboratory are recognized reproductive hazards, and the available methods to limit your potential exposures to these hazards.
3. Pregnant lab workers should also discuss the work they perform with their personal physician. Any work restrictions placed on you by your physician should be discussed with your lab supervisor immediately. Employee Health Services should also be contacted at 412-647-3659.
4. Specific federal and state regulations apply to pregnant workers exposed to radiation or radioactive materials. Contact the Radiation Safety Office (412-624-2728) for further information.
5. Substitute less hazardous reagents in experiments or if possible curtail certain lab activities for the duration of pregnancy.
6. Follow all of the safety procedures outlined in the General Safety, Lab Safety, and Chemical Safety sections of this manual.
7. Wash your hands with soap and water after handling chemicals or biological agents, and when leaving the lab.
8. Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when working with hazardous materials. Contact your supervisor or EH&S if you are uncertain about what PPE is needed.
9. Never eat, drink, apply cosmetics, pump/express breast milk, or make other hand-to-mouth contact in the laboratory.
10. If you would like assistance establishing safe chemical handling practices in your laboratory, notify your supervisor or contact EH&S at 412-624-9505.

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More information on reproductive hazards in the lab:

NIOSH: The Effects of Workplace Hazards on Female Reproductive Health
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-104/>

NIOSH: The Effects of Workplace Hazards on Male Reproductive Health
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/96-132/>