

Spotlight On Safety

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Chemical 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 their supervisor as soon as possible if they are pregnant. Supervisors are responsible for determining if substances used in the work area create a known risk of reproductive hazard, discussing properties of the material with the employee, and for establishing standards for appropriate handling and protective measures for the type of work that is being performed in the lab. Many chemicals 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
- Heavy metals and their compounds (e.g. mercury, methyl mercury)
- Anesthetic gases

Safe Practices

These materials include, but are not limited to: metals, anesthetic gases, carcinogens, pesticides, solvents, manufacturing chemicals and lab reagents.

- Review Safety Data Sheets (SDS) to become familiar with any reproductive hazards presented by the chemical or chemicals.
- Use personal protective equipment to reduce exposures.
- Avoid skin contact, wear two pairs of gloves whenever possible.
- Store chemicals in sealed containers when not in use.
- Wash hands with soap and water after contact with hazardous chemicals.
- Participate in all safety and health education, training and monitoring programs offered by UCR.
- If you must handle an open container of a volatile chemical, do so in the fume hood, make sure it is working properly.
- Avoid taking contaminated clothing or other objects home - store street clothes in a separate area and wash work clothing separately from other laundry.
- 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.

For more information visit www.ehs.ucr.edu or call 951-827-5528 if you have any concerns regarding the reproductive hazard of a chemical.