

All personnel who may have exposure to animals either directly or indirectly must enroll in the UNT HSC Occupational Health Program.

- Staff members who may handle animals must complete required training and an **Occupational Health Questionnaire** prior to working with animals. Contact Christina Aguilar at 817-735-2533 or [Christina.Aguilar@unthsc.edu](mailto:Christina.Aguilar@unthsc.edu)
- **Staff members who do not handle animals but may enter animal facilities** are required to be issued the information on this page (submission of this completed form constitutes enrollment and is valid for one year).

This information is provided for persons who enter DLAM animal facilities, but whose daily work activities DO NOT include direct contact with animals. This group may include: maintenance and housekeeping staff, physical plant workers, administrators, inspectors, vendors and visitors.

**Hazards associated with animals include:**

1. **Physical injuries**, e.g., animal bites, scratches or kicks, lifting heavy animals, cages, or equipment.
2. **Zoonotic diseases** transmittable from animal to human. These diseases are uncommon in laboratory animals and DLAM has measures in place to prevent transmission. Risks are further reduced by use of personal protective equipment such as lab coats, gloves, safety glasses and respirators while handling animals and equipment.
3. **Allergies** associated with exposure to contact respiratory allergens, such as animal dander or urine.

Of the hazards, ALLERGIES are the only significant risk for individuals who do not directly handle animals or enter animal rooms. Even outside the animal holding rooms, allergens are frequently airborne or adhere to surfaces such as hallway walls.

**Animal allergies**

Development of allergies is the single most common occupational hazard for personnel who work with research animals. Allergies can develop to a single animal species or to multiple species, and can even begin after long-term exposure. Once a person develops an allergy and is then exposed to the allergen, histamine release and other factors can cause a variety of symptoms within minutes of exposure. These symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Sneezing and coughing
- Itchy, watery eyes
- Skin reactions (reddening of the skin)
- Other respiratory symptoms, including asthma or difficulty breathing in severe cases.

The most common allergies in laboratory animal handlers develop from continued exposure to protein allergens commonly found in bedding, cages and residual dust particles. People who develop allergic symptoms should seek medical counseling, and may need to wear special protective equipment or even discontinue working with the species if severe symptoms occur when exposed.

As a person who does not handle animals in DLAM facilities, your risk of developing allergies to animals is low. However, when you enter an animal facility:

1. **Contact the animal facility manager** upon arrival for guidance and facility-specific concerns.
2. **Do not handle or touch animals.** If your job responsibility includes touching animals, you must obtain training in animal care and use, and enroll in the Occupational Health and Safety Program by completing an Occupational Health Questionnaire. This form is not intended for you.
3. **All facility entrants must follow all instructions posted at the entry door about wearing protective clothing.**
4. **If you experience symptoms listed above within minutes of entering the animal facility, report the problem to your supervisor, who will initiate workplace illness/injury protocols.** If not an HSC employee, report the problem to the Animal Care and Use Program at 817-735-2533 or 817-735-2017.

***I understand the potential hazards related to entering an animal facility as explained above and will follow the listed recommendations.***

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	DEPARTMENT/DEPT. AFFILIATION
EMAIL		TELEPHONE

**SIGNATURE**

**DATE**