

## Laboratory Animal Allergens



Animal allergies are one of the most common conditions affecting individuals who regularly work with or around animals. People who are already predisposed to developing allergies are at an increased risk of developing Laboratory Animal Allergies (LAA).

### WHAT ARE LABORATORY ANIMAL ALLERGENS?

Animal Allergens are proteins produced by animals such as dander, fur, feathers, saliva, urine, and feces.

### RISK FACTORS

Repeated exposure to animal allergens can cause individuals to develop allergies over time. Symptoms may take weeks, months, or years to appear. Vivaria with high animal population densities can have elevated levels of allergenic proteins, increasing the likelihood of developing allergies among workers.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



- Stuffy nose
- Itchy eyes
- Sneezing
- Skin rash
- Hives
- Asthma
- Difficulty breathing

### HOW CAN YOU REDUCE EXPOSURE?



#### Engineering Controls:

- Use ventilated hoods (BSC, Animal transfer station, fume hood) when performing tasks with animals.
- Ventilated cage racks
- Filter-top cages



#### PPE:

- Wear PPE to reduce exposure: facility-dedicated scrubs, gloves, hair bonnets, safety glasses, etc.

#### Work Practices:

- Wash hands after handling animals, before taking work breaks, and before leaving work.
- Avoid touching your face and eyes when working with animals.
- Clean work surfaces by wet wiping or mopping.
- Shower and shampoo hair daily.
- Leave work clothes at work or launder separately.



### HOW ARE YOU EXPOSED?

- Inhalation from allergens circulating in the air (e.g., changing cages, handling animals)
- Direct skin or eye contact
- Break in the skin (e.g., animal bite or scratch)

### DID YOU KNOW?



- 11-44% of people working with laboratory animals report LAA (Bush and Stave, 1993).
- Up to 73% of people with pre-existing allergies will develop an allergy to laboratory animals (Agrup, et. al., 1986).

### SCHEDULE AN EVALUATION

Contact Occupational Medicine to schedule an appointment.  
608-265-5610

