



# Laboratory Pregnancy Protection Fact Sheet

Exposure to certain chemicals and other hazardous materials in the laboratory has the potential to affect the reproductive health of women and the developing fetus during pregnancy. The first trimester of pregnancy is a period of high susceptibility and often a woman does not know that she is pregnant during part of this period. Women of childbearing potential are warned to be especially cautious when working with reproductive toxins (teratogens) or mutagens, radioactive materials, and infectious materials. All lab staff, faculty, and students must always follow the policies set by the University of New Orleans (UNO), including the Chemical Hygiene Plan, the Regulated Waste Guidelines, and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Assessment. Lab staff, faculty, and students must also read and be thoroughly familiar with the chemical safety data sheet (SDS) before working with the chemical. Women of childbearing potential must also follow these guidelines to protect themselves and their unborn children.

▶▶▶ **Teratogens & Mutagens:** Ensure you are thoroughly familiar with the list of chemicals that are used in your laboratory. If any of these chemicals are teratogens or mutagens, which will be listed on the SDSs, then exhibit exemplary behaviors when working with them.

▶▶▶ **Radioactive Materials:** If you have radioactive materials in your lab, you must take extra precaution to implement the “time, distance, shielding” method of radioactivity protection. Decrease the time you are around radioactive materials. Increase the distance between yourself and the radioactive materials. Shield the radioactive materials when they are being stored. Shield yourself when working with radioactive materials. Ensuring you wear your dosimetry badges is especially important during pregnancy so that we can measure the amount of radiation that the fetus has been exposed to. Special pregnancy dosimetry badges are issues to women who are pregnant. If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, tell your supervisor, your Principal Investigator, and the UNO Lab Safety Officer.

## Common Teratogens & Mutagens in the Lab

| Chemical Name                             | CAS #      |
|---|------------|
| Anesthetic Gases                          | 10024-97-2 |
| Arsenic & Compounds                       | 7440-38-2  |
| Benzene                                   | 71-43-2    |
| Cadmium & Compounds                       | 7440-43-9  |
| Carbon Disulfide                          | 75-15-0    |
| Ethylene Glycol Monomethyl & Ethyl Ethers | 109-86-4   |
| Ethylene Oxide                            | 75-21-8    |
| Formamide                                 | 75-12-7    |
| Lead Compounds                            | 7439-92-1  |
| Organic Mercury Compounds                 | 7439-97-6  |
| Potassium Iodide                          | 7681-11-0  |
| Toluene                                   | 108-88-3   |
| Vinyl Chloride                            | 75-01-4    |
| Xylene                                    | 1330-20-7  |

**Note: This is not a complete list of teratogens & mutagens that may be used in the lab.**



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▶▶▶ **Infectious Materials:** Some infectious agents that pose minimal risk to otherwise healthy individuals may pose a higher risk to pregnant women or their babies due to changes in immune response as a result of pregnancy. It may take up to 6 weeks after the end of pregnancy for the maternal immune system to return to normal. A zoonotic disease is one that can be transmitted from animals to humans. Almost any of the zoonotic disease agents that can infect healthy people pose more of a risk of infection for people who are pregnant. If you have questions regarding the species you are working with or any potential exposure risks, please inquire with your Department, or contact the UNO Lab Safety Officer.

## Commonly Cited Examples of Infectious Agents that Pose Risk to the Fetus

|                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Toxoplasmosis    | Rubella              |
| Hepatitis B      | Cytomegalovirus      |
| Syphilis         | Herpes Simplex       |
| Varicella-Zoster | Listeria             |
| HIV              | E. Coli              |
| Parvovirus B19   | Group B Streptococci |

**Note: This is not a complete list of infectious materials that may pose risk to a woman or fetus.**

## Things to Remember!

- **Keep your lab and yourself clean!** This a standard housekeeping practice that should be especially important during pregnancy or potential pregnancy. Keep surfaces clean and decontaminated. Change PPE often. Wash your hands excessively.
- **Know your chemical inventory and read the SDSs!** It is very important that you are aware of all of the chemicals that are in your lab. You can find this information by consulting your chemical inventory for the lab and reading the corresponding SDSs.
- **Wear your PPE and dosimetry badges!** Double check your PPE before doffing to ensure it is not torn or otherwise damaged and that you have your dosimetry badge(s) if you're working with radioactive materials.

If you have any questions about the contents of this Fact Sheet, contact the UNO Lab Safety Officer at [labsafety@uno.edu](mailto:labsafety@uno.edu)