

Reproductive and Developmental Health Policy Statement

Rutgers University is committed to providing a safe work environment for students, faculty, and staff, and acts to minimize and control exposure to chemical, physical, biological, or radiological agents below regulatory and professionally recognized occupational health values.

Exposures during routine teaching or work activities, when performed according to manufacturer instructions and/or established work practices, should be minimal and below recognized occupational exposure limits.

However, there is often insufficient scientific information to determine safe exposure levels for a developing fetus, and there is uncertainty extrapolating the effects observed in animal studies to humans. Despite these limitations, information does exist for some chemical, physical, biological, or radiological agents that could produce adverse reproductive health outcomes.

Any Rutgers University student, faculty, or staff member who is pregnant, or has a reproductive and developmental health concern, or works with known mutagenic, teratogenic, or carcinogenic agents may contact REHS at (732) 445-2550 to request an assessment as described in this policy. Participation is voluntary and intended to provide the student, faculty, or staff member with information about potential reproductive health issues associated with their university environment as well as recommended control measures so they can make an informed decision about their continued work or learning activities with their personal obstetrician.

Objectives

The objectives of this Reproductive and Developmental Health (RDH) policy are to:

- Identify potential reproductive and developmental health issues through workplace and teaching lab assessments.
- Provide hazard and risk communication to students, faculty, and staff regarding chemical, biological, or radiological agents they use and physical activities they perform that may affect reproductive and developmental health.
- Recommend control measures to eliminate or minimize the potential exposure to reproductive and developmental health agents.
- Maximize student, faculty, or staff privacy while communicating recommended control measures to individuals and administrative units responsible for implementing elements of this policy.
- Identify the process used to assess reproductive and developmental health concerns as well as the responsibilities of each participant in this policy.

Process

Under this policy, any student, faculty, or staff member may use the following process to identify and assess potential reproductive and developmental health issues.

1. A student, faculty, or staff member contacts REHS to request and schedule a workplace or teaching lab assessment.
2. If desired, a student may call the Student Health Services, and faculty or staff may contact the Occupational Health Department to use as a resource to facilitate REHS review and transfer of information to their personal obstetrician/gynecologist.
3. REHS will conduct the assessment and provide a written report with recommendations to the student, faculty, or staff member.
4. REHS may share this information with other individuals, such as supervisors or University Physicians, to address concerns and implement recommendations contained within the assessment. If the student, faculty, or staff member requests privacy, REHS will maintain confidentiality with respect to the pregnancy or reproductive and developmental health concern to the extent permitted by applicable law.
5. After completing the assessment, REHS will offer to schedule a follow-up meeting with the student, faculty, or staff member to discuss their assessment, its recommendations, and potential health risks.

6. Students, faculty, or staff members are advised to contact REHS, Health Services, or Occupational Health if they have additional concerns or questions regarding their assessment.

Responsibilities

An effective Reproductive and Developmental Health policy identifies the individuals and units that participate in the assessment, evaluation, and communication processes and highlights their respective responsibilities. Although the decision to request an assessment and participate in this policy is strictly voluntary, if an individual chooses to request an assessment, then the following individuals and administrative units share responsibility for the participation in and implementation of this reproductive and developmental health policy.

1. Students, Faculty, and Staff
 - a. Observe all safety requirements for the work activity you are performing. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Attend required safety training [Right-to-Know, Chemical Hygiene, etc] for the work activities you perform.
 - Review and know the hazards associated with the substances and equipment you use to conduct your work activities, as well as others in your work area(s).
 - Perform your work according to manufacturer instructions, material safety data sheets (MSDS), training, and the Chemical Hygiene Plan [for lab work or instruction].
 - Immediately report all spills, concerns, or exposures to the instructor and/or faculty member (students), your supervisor, and REHS.
 - b. Contact REHS promptly to request a workplace assessment to evaluate physical activities and potential chemical, biological, or radiological agents in your work area if you are pregnant, planning a pregnancy, breastfeeding, or if you have other reproductive and developmental health concerns.
 - c. As soon as possible, share the results of your REHS assessment with:
 - Your personal obstetrician/gynecologist physician,
 - Your pediatrician - especially if you are breastfeeding.
 - d. Students, faculty, and staff are advised to attend a follow-up meeting with REHS to discuss your assessment and its recommendations. If desired, a Rutgers University Health Services or the Occupational Health Department Physician is available to participate in the meeting to facilitate transfer of information to their personal obstetrician/gynecologist.
2. Teaching Assistants and Instructors
 - a. Ensure students understand and follow the established practices and procedures [i.e., the laboratory Chemical Hygiene Plan] for the laboratory activity they are performing.
 - b. Implement the REHS recommendations contained in the assessment report. If these recommendations cannot be implemented, notify REHS immediately.
 - c. Report all spills and incidents to REHS immediately.
 - d. If a student reports a pregnancy and/or has reproductive and developmental health concern, then inform them of this policy and refer the student to REHS.
3. Principal Investigators and Supervisors
 - a. Ensure employees know and follow the manufacturer instructions, material safety data sheets (MSDS), training, and the Chemical Hygiene Plan [for lab work or instruction] required for their work activities.
 - b. Ensure employees attend the required safety training for their work activities.
 - c. Provide time during normal work hours for employees to receive consultations with the Occupational Health Department and/or REHS staff.
 - d. Implement the REHS recommendations contained in the assessment report. If these recommendations cannot be implemented, notify REHS immediately.
 - e. If an employee reports a pregnancy and/or has reproductive and developmental health concern, then inform them of this policy and refer the employee to REHS.
 - f. Report all spills and incidents to REHS immediately.

4. REHS
 - a. Upon request by a student, faculty, or staff member, conduct an assessment to identify potential chemical, physical, biological, or radiological hazards that may affect their reproductive and developmental health.
 - b. Report the assessment results and exposure control recommendations to the student, faculty, or staff member, and offer follow-up as necessary and/or requested.
 - c. Communicate the potential risks associated with the chemical, physical, biological, or radiological hazards identified in the assessment.
 - d. Include the Reproductive and Developmental Health policy in new employee orientation and annual safety training programs, as appropriate.
 - e. Advise the student, faculty, and staff member to share all information provided with their obstetrician/gynecologist and with their pediatrician - particularly if they are breastfeeding.
 - f. Advise the student, faculty, or staff member to inform their professor, principal investigator, or supervisor as soon as possible of their pregnancy to implement REHS recommendations from the workplace assessment. However, upon request, REHS will not disclose a pregnancy or reproductive and developmental health concern.
5. Rutgers University Health Services
 - a. Refer reproductive and developmental health inquiries and requests related to the university environment (i.e., lab work, campus housing) but not lifestyles to REHS for assessment.
 - b. Upon request, facilitate REHS review of assessment results and information transfer to their personal obstetrician/gynecologist.
6. Occupational Health Department
 - a. Refer reproductive and developmental health inquiries and requests to REHS for workplace assessments.
 - b. Upon request, facilitate REHS review of assessment results and information transfer to their personal obstetrician/gynecologist.
 - c. As necessary, provide appropriate medical surveillance to student employee, faculty, or staff members.
7. Reproductive Health Team
 - a. In some instances, Rutgers may consult a Reproductive Team to address complex issues, which may include internal and/or external resources.

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