Occupational Health Recommendations for Persons Working with Rabbits

All personnel working with animals, their tissues, or working in areas where animals are housed must complete an Animal Use Medical Screening form. This form screens for exposure to possible health hazards in the work environment. Complete the form online at this link: https://ucs.admin.washington.edu/era/uwnetid/AUMS/

1. Tetanus booster should be obtained every 10 years.

2. Protective gloves should be worn when handling rabbits. Hands should be thoroughly washed upon completion of tasks with the animal/glove removal

3. Zoonotic Disease:
   - **Pasteurella multocida (Pasteurellosis)**: a serious pathogen of rabbits and has been associated with infected bites and scratches.
     - *Transmission*: via bite or scratch.
     - *Disease in people*: infected wounds.
   - **Cryptosporidium**: Protozoal organism that is common in mammals, particularly in younger animals.
     - *Transmission*: fecal/oral.
     - *Disease in people*: self-limiting diarrhea.
   - **Leptospirosis**: *Leptospira* spp. bacteria found in many animals but are most commonly associated with livestock and dogs. Transmission from laboratory rodents to people has been reported. Reservoir/source of infection to people: Rats, mice, voles, hedgehogs, gerbils, squirrels, rabbits, hamsters, reptiles, dogs, sheep, goats, horses, standing water.
     - *Transmission*: Leptospires are shed in the urine of infected animals. Direct contact with urine or tissues via skin abrasions or contact with mucous membranes has been reported. Transmission can also occur through inhalation of infectious droplet aerosols and by ingestion.
     - *Disease in people*: Flu-like symptoms, mild to severe. Death has been reported.
   - **Enteric Yersiniosis**: *Y. enterocolitica* and *Y. pseudotuberculosis*.
     - *Disease in people*: gastroenterocolitis characterized by fever, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.
4. **Injuries:**
   - Immediately wash area thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
   - Control any bleeding and cover with protective dressing (bandage, etc.).
   - For any injuries, needlestick/sharps injury or for signs/symptoms of wound infection such as redness, swelling or pain, contact the Employee Health Center at Hall Health at 206.685.1026. After hours or if the clinic is unavailable, go to the nearest Emergency Department.
   - AT HARBORVIEW for injuries or illness contact Employee Health Services at 206.744.3081; after hours go to the HMC emergency department.

   Report injuries to your supervisor and on the UW OARS (Online Accident Reporting System): [http://www.ehs.washington.edu/ohsoars/index.shtm](http://www.ehs.washington.edu/ohsoars/index.shtm)

5. **Illness:**

   If you develop signs or symptoms that you think may be related to your work with these animals and/or research work, contact the UW Employee Health Clinic at 206-685-1026. If you see your own provider, inform him/her that you work with these animals, and any other pertinent information regarding your research work.

6. **Allergies:**
   - A major Glycoprotein allergen is found in the fur of the animals, and minor allergenic components are found in rabbit saliva and urine. If you have suspected allergy symptoms, such as a runny nose and sneezing (allergic rhinitis), irritation and tearing of eyes (allergic conjunctivitis), asthma, or skin rash (atopic dermatitis), contact the Employee Health Clinic at 206-685-1026.
   - Precautions and methods of control to prevent exposure to animal allergenic substances can be found in the NIOSH ALERT "Preventing Asthma in Animal Handlers." Download this document and review with personnel: [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/97-116/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/97-116/)