

Working with Amphibians and Reptiles

Animal Use Medical Screening (AUMS):

All personnel working with animals, their tissues, or working in areas where animals are housed must submit an Animal Use Medical Screening (AUMS) form every 3 years to screen for exposure to possible health hazards in the work environment. Complete the form online at:

<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/research-lab/animal-use-medical-screening-aums>

Potential zoonotic diseases from amphibians and reptiles:

See *Appendix A: Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Amphibians and Reptiles* for a list of possible zoonotic diseases.

Preventative measures:

- Tetanus booster should be obtained every 10 years.
- Only trained personnel should handle the amphibians and reptiles.
- Wear appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE). Wear protective gloves when handling the animals. Wash hands thoroughly upon completion of the tasks with the animal and upon removal of the glove/PPE. Use antiseptic hand sanitizer between glove use if needed, until you can get to handwashing facilities.

Injuries:

- See the [EH&S Exposure Response Poster](#).
- 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 206-685-1026. After hours or if the clinic is unavailable, go to the [UWMC Emergency Department](#). For incidents at Harborview, call the Harborview Employee Health Services at 206-744-3081. After hours, go to the [Emergency Department at Harborview](#).
- Report injuries on the UW Online Accident Reporting System (OARS) at: <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/workplace/accident-and-injury-reporting>

Illness:

- If you develop signs or symptoms that you think may be related to your work with animals and/or research work, contact the [Employee Health Center](#).
- If you see your own provider, inform him/her that you work with these animals and any other pertinent information regarding your research work. Inform Employee Health after seeing your healthcare provider.
- Report work-related illness on the UW Online Accident Reporting System (OARS) at: <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/workplace/accident-and-injury-reporting>

Allergies:

Sensitivity to amphibians and reptiles is rare, yet there have been cases of asthma caused by frog proteins. Contact the Employee Health Center if you experience this symptom when working with amphibians.

References:

- UW Research and Occupational Health webpage:
<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/research-lab/research-occupational-health>
- University of California Davis Zoonosis Information by Species webpage:
<http://safetyservices.ucdavis.edu/ps/occh/acuohp/pem/zis>
- Washington State University Zoonotic Diseases webpage:
<https://iacuc.wsu.edu/zoonotic-diseases/>
- U.S. Air Force Zoonotic Diseases webpage:
<http://www.phsource.us/PH/ZD/index.htm>

Contacts:

- [UW Employee Health Center](#): 206-685-1026
- Harborview Employee Health Services: 206-744-3081
- For questions on AUMS: 206-221-7770
- For questions on UW Online Accident Reporting: 206-543-7388

Appendix A: Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Amphibians and Reptiles

Appendix A
Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Amphibians and Reptiles

Disease/ Infective Agent	Transmission	Incubation period	Disease in people
<i>Edwardsiella tarda</i>	Through open wound or ingestion of contaminated water.	Unknown	Includes nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
Leptospirosis	Usually through an open wound or mucous membrane after coming into direct contact with urine or tissues of infected animals.	2-30 days	Can range from unapparent infection to severe infection, flu-like symptoms.
Psittacosis	By direct contact or inhalation from exudates, secretions or desiccated feces.	4-15 days	Includes fever, headache, weakness, upper or lower respiratory tract disease.
Salmonellosis	Through the oral/fecal route, directly or indirectly.	6-72 hours	Includes sudden onset of diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, and low-grade fever.
Sparganosis	Ingestion of contaminated meat or water. Contact with infected amphibians.	20 days to 14 months (but the larva may remain for years or decades before symptoms appear)	Includes nodular lesions that can appear anywhere on the body. Main symptom is itching, sometimes accompanied by rashes.