



Information for Immunocompromised and Pregnant Individuals

Animal care and use personnel with certain health conditions may be at a significantly higher risk of acquiring a zoonoses or an infection if they have a compromised immune system or are pregnant. There is also an increased risk of complications due to infections for these individuals. Many diseases and treatments may cause a person's immune system to become compromised. Examples include diabetes, lupus, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, and HIV as well as radiation and chemotherapy treatment for cancer patients. During pregnancy an individual experiences suppression of the immune system. Some chemicals, radiation exposure and zoonoses such as Toxoplasmosis may cause abortion, complications, or birth defects.

Risk assessments have been conducted for the projects you are working on, and safety precautions have been put in place. Engineering controls such as biosafety cabinets, fume hoods and other equipment are used in the animal facilities to reduce exposure to infectious agents, chemicals, and allergens. Administrative controls such as sanitation schedules are also in place. Personal protective equipment is required as an additional step of protection.

If you work with animals and you have a suppress immune system or are pregnant, it is important for you to indicate this information on your Health Screening Questionnaire. It is also important for you to discuss with your personal physician your role in working with animals and your potential occupational exposures.

If you have any questions, you can contact the OHS Medical Reviewer, Dr. Woodward at 217-333-2711.