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EH&S Workplace Hazards to Reproductive Health

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EH&S services are available to all Laboratory workers, including contractors and subcontractors. Our goal is to help members of the workforce be fully informed about reproductive hazards in their environment. Our role is to assist the worker in evaluating personal risks and to advise on mitigating steps they may take.

**Hazards**

Awareness of the types of hazards and where we may encounter them is important. Although the following lists are not intended to be inclusive, they give an appreciation of the types of occupational hazards that may affect reproductive health.

**Laboratory Exposures**
- chlorinated and aromatic hydrocarbons
- radio frequency radiation
- X-ray machines
- radionuclides
- ionizing radiation
- amines/alcohol
- mercury and lead
- hazardous gases

**Machine/Welding Shop Exposures**
- radioactive metals
- heavy metals (lead)
- degreasers

**Home Exposures**
- cleaning agents
- paints and stains
- tobacco and alcohol
- epoxies and solders
- hobby materials
- pesticides

**Speaker Available**
If your group wishes to learn more about EH&S programs, a representative of the team is available.

**Workplace Hazards to Reproductive Health**

**if** you are
in your reproductive years,
and you and your partner are
thinking about having a baby, or
you are a pregnant or nursing female,

**then** valuable services
from the Environment Health & Safety
Division (EH&S) are available to help ensure your reproductive health.
Occupational Medicine
On a voluntary basis and at your own initiative, you may set up an appointment with a nurse to discuss your reproductive health concerns.

Services: Consultation and information.
Contact Health Services at 486-6266 to schedule an appointment.

A few suggestions:
- Initiate a consultation as soon as conception is confirmed or, preferably, during family planning.
- Learn about possible workplace hazards that could influence the outcome of your pregnancy or affect healthy choices.
- Discuss safety in the workplace and at home, diet, exercise, hobbies, and any other concerns relevant to your pregnancy.

Industrial Hygiene
Contact an Industrial Hygienist at 495-2603.

Services: A few examples of what an industrial hygienist can do for you through this program:
- Conduct workplace evaluations and provide information about hazards; perform workplace assessment of activities involving chemical, physical, and biological reproductive hazards.
- Recommend how to minimize chemical exposures for men and women who are planning a family, as well as for pregnant women and those who are breast-feeding.
- Contact the employee directly and review job operations, controls, etc.
- Follow up with you and your supervisor to implement recommendations.

Did you know?
Exposure to sufficient levels of lead can reduce a male’s sperm count.
A list of chemicals that can cause reproductive effects is in Berkeley Lab’s web-based Chemical Hygiene and Safety Plan. This can be found at the EH&S web page, www.lbl.gov/ehs/chsp/chem_hygiene.htm
Chemical exposure should be limited for men and women who are planning conception.
Permissible radiation exposures during a declared pregnancy are limited to 0.5 rem over nine months, compared to 5 rem per year for a radiation worker. (Federal law 10 CFR 835)
Employees should be careful that their work clothing does not contain any hazards that they can carry home to pregnant or nursing mothers.
It is important to know before conception about workplace hazards, such as chemical and ionizing radiation, because critical cell development occurs during the first three months of pregnancy.

Radiation Protection Services
Services: Training, worksite evaluation, information about radiation protection, and information about the potential hazards of ionizing radiation.
Contact the Dosimetry Office at 486-7619.
- Training for workers and supervisors on rights and responsibilities regarding work in a radiation environment regulated by federal law.
- Worksite evaluations for employees who work with or around ionizing radiation sources.
- Reports of your prior radiation dosimeter readings.
- Dosimeters to monitor workplace radiation exposures.

When should you contact the EH&S Team?
When and how a woman decides to declare her pregnancy is a highly personal choice. Similarly, Laboratory employees who are pregnant have a choice about if, when, and how to declare their pregnancy within the workplace.

Pregnancy declaration counseling: Contact Health Services, 486-6266.

Members of the EH&S team can help guide an individual to a comfortable level of confidentiality. The choices are:
- total confidentiality
- declaring to one’s own supervisor
- declaring to a health professional
- full disclosure

A confidential consultation with an EH&S team member can help an employee identify reproductive hazards and provide guidance for making informed choices about activities.

The EH&S member who meets with you will tailor the level of confidentiality to satisfy your needs.