

## Personnel

### Item 2 - Occupational Health Policy for Individuals with Animal Contact

#### Subsection 2.7 - Occupational Risks of Working with Pigs

##### Infectious Agents

Gastrointestinal Flora: Pig feces can transmit a number of organisms that can infect humans and usually cause diarrhea. Cryptosporidium, Salmonella, Balantidium and Campylobacter organisms can all be found in “normal” pig feces. Transmission of these organisms to humans is by ingestion.

Prevention: Good personal hygiene and wearing protective clothing (shoe covers, gloves, gowns or lab coats) will help prevent transmission. Frequent hand washing is probably most important since most transmission occurs secondarily (touching something contaminated and then touching the mouth).

Treatment: Treatment is dependent on the severity of the diarrhea and/or other signs. If treatment from a physician is necessary, the doctor should be informed that you work with pigs on a regular basis so that these particular organisms will be considered higher in the diagnosis.

##### Bites and Injuries

Background: Pigs are not usually aggressive, so bites are rare. Neonatal pigs have “needle teeth” which are very sharp canines that can cause significant puncture wounds. Adults are strong and can cause significant crush injury with their molars. Pigs also tend to be very active and as they get large, they can be a hazard of physical injury. Although they are not aggressive, they often struggle vigorously during handling and are very strong.

Prevention: Good handling techniques are most important. Equipment such as pig boards and squeeze cages can make handling larger animals much safer.

Treatment: For bite wounds, wash thoroughly with an antibacterial soap and water. Complete an incident report. Seek medical attention if there is excessive bleeding, pain or joint involvement. If swelling, discoloration, chronic pain or any discharge develops, seek medical attention immediately. For other injuries, treatment will depend on nature of injury, but always fill out an accident report.

##### Allergies

Background: Although allergies to pigs are uncommon, there have been reported cases of asthma-like symptoms in individuals working with large numbers of pigs. This is probably due to ammonia exposure and not true allergies to the pigs. Some individuals may have specific allergies to urine components, but this is rare.

##### Additional Information

###### Books:

Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals, Institute for Laboratory Animal Resources, National Research Council. National Academy Press, 1997.

Swine as Models in Biomedical Research, Swindle ed. Iowa State University Press, 1992.

Internet:

<http://clueless.ucdavis.edu/> - This is the laboratory animal occupational health information provided by the University of California – Davis; compiled by Dr. Phil Tillman.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Dr. Robert Quinn, Director of the Department of Laboratory Animal Resources at 4-6563.

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