

Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety (REHS)

Program Name:	Reproductive and Developmental Health Program		
Responsible Executive:	Executive Director of REHS		
Adopted:	December 7, 2004	Reviewed/Revised:	July 6, 2018

1. Program Statement

It is the policy of Rutgers University to provide a safe and healthful workplace, including minimizing risks to the reproductive system and/or unborn children of Rutgers faculty, students and staff during the course of routine work activities.

2. Reason for Program

This program establishes procedures to assess risk factors and provide control measures to minimize physical, chemical, biological, and/or radiological risks that may affect reproductive and developmental health. This program is *voluntary* and will only be performed at the request of faculty, students or staff. The resultant written assessment report can be shared with personal reproductive health physicians (e.g. OB/GYN, fertility specialists, pediatricians, etc.) and/or Rutgers occupational or student health professionals at the discretion of the faculty, student or staff member who requested the assessment so that informed decisions about continued work or learning activities can be made.

Exposures during routine teaching or work activities, when performed according to manufacturer instructions and/or established work practices, should be minimal and below recognized occupational exposure limits.

However, there is often insufficient scientific information to determine safe exposure levels for a developing fetus, and there is uncertainty extrapolating the effects observed in animal studies to humans. Despite these limitations, information does exist for some chemical, physical, biological, or radiological agents that could produce adverse reproductive health outcomes.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Identify potential reproductive and developmental health issues through workplace, teaching and laboratory assessments.
- Provide hazard and risk communication to faculty, students, and staff regarding chemical, biological, or radiological agents they use and physical activities they perform that may affect reproductive and developmental health.
- Recommend control measures to eliminate or minimize the potential exposure to reproductive and developmental health agents.

- Maximize faculty, student or staff privacy while communicating recommended control measures to individuals and administrative departments responsible for implementing elements of this program.
- Identify the process used to assess reproductive and developmental health concerns as well as the responsibilities of each participant in this program.

3. **Who Should Read this Program**

This program applies to all Rutgers faculty, students or staff who may have reproductive or developmental health concerns at any point in their work or study at Rutgers.

4. **The Program**

I. **Roles and Responsibilities**

An effective Reproductive and Developmental Health Program identifies the individuals and departments that participate in the assessment, evaluation, and communication processes and highlights their respective responsibilities. Although the decision to request an assessment and participate in this program is strictly voluntary, if an individual chooses to request an assessment, then the following individuals and administrative departments share responsibility for the participation in and implementation of this Reproductive and Developmental Health Program.

A. Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety (REHS)

Upon the request of a faculty, student or staff member, REHS will:

- 1) Conduct an assessment to identify potential physical, chemical, biological and/or radiological hazards that may affect reproductive and/or developmental health.
- 2) Provide a written report of the assessment including exposure control recommendations to the faculty, student or staff member and offer follow-up as necessary and/or requested.
- 3) Communicate the potential risks associated with the physical, chemical, biological and/or radiological hazards identified in the assessment.
- 4) Include information about the Reproductive and Developmental Health Program in new employee orientation and annual safety training programs as appropriate.
- 5) Advise the faculty, student or staff member to share the assessment information with their personal reproductive health physicians and/or Rutgers occupational or student health physicians.
- 6) Encourage pregnant faculty, student or staff members to inform their professor(s), principal investigator or supervisor of their pregnancy so that the assessment recommendations can be jointly discussed and expeditiously implemented. However, the faculty, student or staff member is under no obligation to divulge this information and REHS will not disclose such information unless authorized by the faculty, student or staff member.

B. Faculty, Students and Staff

Faculty, students and staff who are pregnant or have a reproductive or developmental health concern, or who work with known mutagenic, teratogenic or carcinogenic agents that could produce adverse reproductive health outcomes are advised to:

- 1) Contact REHS (848-445-2550) promptly to request a workplace assessment to evaluate physical activities and potential chemical, biological, and/or radiological agents in the work environment if you are pregnant, planning pregnancy, breastfeeding, or if you have other reproductive and/or developmental health concerns.
- 2) Observe all safety requirements for the work activity you are performing. This includes:
 - a. Attending required safety training (e.g. Right-to-Know, Laboratory Safety, Radiation Safety, etc.) for the work activities that you perform.
 - b. Reviewing and knowing the hazards associated with the substances and equipment you and nearby co-workers use to conduct work activities.
 - c. Performing your work according to the manufacturer's instructions, safety data sheets (SDS), training, and the Chemical Hygiene Plan (i.e. for laboratory work).
 - d. Immediately reporting spills, potential exposures or other concerns regarding hazardous materials to your immediate supervisor, instructor, professor and REHS.
- 3) Share the results of the REHS assessment with your personal reproductive health physician as soon as possible following receipt of the written assessment.
- 4) Consider attending a follow-up meeting with REHS to discuss the assessment and recommendations. If desired, a Rutgers University Health Services, Occupational Health Department, and/or Student Health Services physician is also available to participate in the meeting to facilitate transfer of information to your personal reproductive health physician.

C. Teaching Assistants and Instructors

- 1) Ensure students understand and follow the established practices and procedures (e.g. Chemical Hygiene Plan, Standard Operating Procedures) for laboratory activities they perform.
- 2) Implement the REHS recommendations contained in the assessment report. If the recommendations cannot be implemented, notify REHS immediately.
- 3) Report all spills of hazardous materials and other incidents (e.g. chemical odors, fires, etc.) to REHS immediately.
- 4) Inform students of this program and refer them to REHS if they report a pregnancy, reproductive health and/or developmental health concern.

D. Principal Investigators and Supervisors

- 1) Ensure faculty, staff and students know and follow the manufacturer's instructions, safety data sheets (SDS), Chemical Hygiene Plan (i.e. for laboratory work), and training required for their work activities.
- 2) Ensure faculty, staff and students attend the required safety training for their work activities.

- 3) Provide time during normal work hours for employees to receive consultations with the Occupational Health Department and/or REHS staff.
- 4) Implement the REHS recommendations contained in the assessment report. If the recommendations cannot be implemented, notify REHS immediately.
- 5) Inform faculty, students and staff of this program and refer them to REHS if they report a pregnancy, reproductive health and/or developmental health concern.
- 6) Report all spills of hazardous materials and other incidents (e.g. chemical odors, fires, etc.) to REHS immediately.

E. Rutgers University Health Services

- 1) Refer reproductive and/or developmental health inquiries and requests related to Rutgers University environments (e.g. laboratory settings, campus housing, etc.) to REHS for workplace assessments.
- 2) Facilitate the review of the REHS assessment report and information transfer to personal reproductive health physicians on behalf of the faculty, student or staff member upon their request.

F. Occupational Health Department

- 1) Refer reproductive and/or developmental health inquiries and requests related to Rutgers University environments (e.g. laboratory settings, campus housing, etc.) to REHS for workplace assessments.
- 2) Facilitate the review of the REHS assessment report and information transfer to personal reproductive health physicians on behalf of the faculty, student or staff member upon their request.

G. Reproductive Health Team

In some cases, Rutgers may consult a Reproductive Team to address complex issues. This team may include internal and/or external resources.

II. Definitions

<i>Carcinogen</i>	A substance capable of causing cancer in living tissue.
<i>Mutagen</i>	An agent, such as radiation or chemical substance, that causes genetic mutation.
<i>Personal Reproductive Physician</i>	A licensed health care physician specializing in reproductive and/or developmental health including but not limited to obstetricians, gynecologists, fertility specialists and pediatricians.
<i>Teratogen</i>	An agent or factor that causes malformation of an embryo.

III. Procedures

A. Reproductive and Developmental Assessment Procedures

Any faculty, student or staff member may use the following process to identify and assess potential reproductive and/or developmental health concerns while actively working or attending classes at Rutgers:

- 1) The faculty, student or staff member contacts REHS to request and schedule a workplace, teaching or laboratory assessment.
- 2) If desired, a student may contact Student Health Services, and faculty or staff may contact the Occupational Health Department to facilitate the transfer of information including the REHS written assessment report to their personal reproductive health physician.
- 3) REHS will conduct the assessment and provide a written report with recommendations to the faculty, student or staff member.
- 4) With the consent of the faculty, student or staff member, REHS may share information with supervisors and/or Rutgers physicians in order to address concerns and implement recommendations contained in the assessment. If the faculty, student or staff member requests privacy, REHS will maintain confidentiality with respect to the pregnancy or reproductive and/or developmental health concern to the extent permitted by applicable law.
- 5) After completing the assessment, REHS will offer to schedule a follow-up meeting with the faculty, student or staff member to discuss the assessment findings, recommendations and potential health risks.
- 6) Faculty, student or staff members are advised to contact REHS, Rutgers University Health Services, or the Occupational Health Department if they have additional concerns or questions regarding their assessment.