



Standard Operating Procedure: Bites or Severe Scratches from Research Animals

June 5, 2023

For life threatening or immobilizing injuries: call 911, then Campus Safety (UTSC/UTSG: (416) 978-2222; UTM: (905) 569-4333).

First Aid Procedures of animal bite or scratch injuries:

1. As soon as practicable after the injury has occurred, wash the wound and surrounding area with soap and water, followed by 70% ethanol or an iodine containing solution.
2. Allow the wound to bleed freely for at least 5 minutes (at least 10 minutes if the wound is extremely dirty). Cover the area with a bandage or sterile gauze.
3. If the wound is a deep puncture or you are unsure of its seriousness, seek prompt medical attention. Bring your health card with you if you have it on hand, but do not delay treatment if you do not have your health card.
4. **Notify your supervisor as soon as possible.** Supervisor will conduct risk stratification, e.g., obtain pathogen or safety data sheet if applicable. Supervisor begins investigation into how to prevent reoccurrence.
5. The injury must be reported within 24 hours through the [UofT online incident/accident eForm](#). Select the appropriate reporting link:
 - a. [Employees](#)
 - b. [Students/Contractors/Visitors](#)
6. Observe the wound for several days. If there are any signs of infection, symptoms persist (redness, swelling, drainage, worsening pain, etc.), seek professional medical care.

Lab Animals (Vivarium or a Research/Teaching Lab)

- A. **Specific pathogen free (SPF)* lab animals that have not been intentionally infected with a biological or chemical agent** (e.g., animals from commercial vendors): Bites or scratches from these animals do not usually cause infection unless the bite is very deep.
- B. **SPF lab animals that have been intentionally infected with a biological or chemical agent:** Bites from these animals could potentially cause infection or other adverse health effects, depending on the hazardous agent that that animal was intentionally exposed with.
- C. **Non-SPF lab animals:** Where health status of animals may not be known, these animals may harbour infectious diseases that could be transferred to humans (zoonoses) through bites or scratches. If the bite/scratch occurred in the vivarium or a research/teaching lab, notify both your **supervisor** and the **vivarium manager**.

*'SPF' refers to animals of known health status that are often maintained free of infectious organisms that have potential to cause significant human disease (zoonoses).

Wild Animals (Vivarium, Research/Teaching Lab or In the Field)

Wild animals may be harbouring infectious diseases that could be transferred to humans (zoonoses). If bitten or scratched by a wild animal. Try to make note of:

- The species/identifying features of the animal



- Whether the animal was displaying unexplained neurological symptoms (rabies status may need to be determined if a mammalian species such as raccoon, skunk or fox)
- If in the field, do not euthanize the animal or dispose of the carcass unless a specific protocol for this purpose has been approved on a U of T Animal Use Protocol and you have been trained to do so. **Never euthanize or dispose of an animal if it is displaying unexplained neurological symptoms.**

Contact **Ayoob Ghalami 416-971-1361** re: any questions re: above.

Contact the **U of T Occupational Health Nurse 416-978-4476** for any occupational health and safety concerns.