

# UWO Preventative Health Program for Animal Handlers Policy

## PURPOSE

The Preventative Health Program for Animal Handlers is designed to ensure that all students, faculty and administrative staff of the University working with mammals or animals as decided by the Standing Committee on Zoonoses and Human Health, are regularly screened for the presence of zoonotic diseases.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Compliance with this policy is the responsibility of Deans, Budget Unit Heads or individual researchers. It is the responsibility of the faculty or the Staff/Faculty Health Services or the Student Health Services, as appropriate, whenever a person under their jurisdiction requires health screening under this policy.

## DEFINITIONS

### (a) Animal Handlers

For the purpose of this policy, an animal handler is any student or member of either the administrative or academic staff who, by reason of their job, research project or course work, is required to come into direct contact with or handle any unpreserved carcasses of dead animals.

### (b) Initial Health Review for All Animal Handlers

This review shall consist of the following:

- i) General health review and allergy assessment and interview.
- ii) Serum sample for reference (10 ml);
- iii) Fecal sample for bacteriology and parasitology;
- iv) Skin test for TB (X-ray if positive to confirm only if clinically indicated thereafter);
- v) Immunization update (which may include Rabies, tetanus, diphtheria, polio, etc.); and
- vi) Counseling as required.

### (c) Annual Health Review for Animal Handlers

1. Animal Care Staff (Employees in one of the UWO animal quarters).

This review shall consist of the following:

- i) Serum sample for:
  - (a) Titre(s) if indicated;
  - (b) Reference serum if clinically indicated;

- ii) Fecal sample(s) for parasitology and/or bacteriology;
- iii) Skin test for TB(X-ray if positive converted, to be done twice, one year apart, and thereafter only if clinically indicated)
- iv) Immunization update; and
- v) Counseling as required.

## 2. Research staff handling animals.

This review shall consist of the following:

- i) Serum sample for:
  - (a) Titre(s) if indicated;
  - (b) Reference serum if clinically indicated;
- ii) Fecal sample(s) for parasitology and/or bacteriology if clinically indicated;
- iii) In the case of primate handlers, skin test for TB(X-ray positive converter, to be done twice, two years apart, and thereafter only if clinically indicated);
- iv) Immunization update;
- v) Counseling as required.

## REQUIREMENTS

### (a) Faculty and Administrative Staff

Following the offer of employment, but before beginning work with animals, the new employee must undergo an "Initial Review for All Animal Handlers".

### (b) Students

All Students covered by this policy undergo an "Initial Health Review for All Animal Handlers" with Student Health Services before beginning to work with animals.

### (c) Annual Review

All persons working with animals must undergo an "Annual Health Review for Animal Handlers", the appropriate Health Services, scheduled on the anniversary of the Initial Health Review.

#### (d) Termination Review

All faculty and administrative staff covered by this policy who are terminating employment at the University must undergo a Termination Health Review which will be identical to the Annual Health Review with the exception of item (iv).

#### (e) Occurrence of Zoonoses

In the event of an occurrence of zoonoses, the following procedures apply;

i) In the event that this screening program discloses the existence of a pathogenic or communicable disease, the person must agree to undergo treatment of this disease as prescribed by the Staff/Faculty Health Service physician or the person's own physician. Treatment provided by the person's own physician must be documented and led to the Staff/Faculty Health Service physician.

It is understood that when a pathogen/communicable disease is diagnosed in an animal handler, the University veterinarian will be informed.

ii) All persons covered by this policy are required to report any febrile illnesses, skin rashes and/or episodes of diarrhea to the Staff/Faculty Health Service, and to undergo the appropriate investigation and treatment as prescribed by the Staff/Faculty Health Services physician or by the person's own physician.

iii) In the event of a zoonotic disease outbreak among the workers in any University animal facility, special testing, such as TB screening, C. Difficile screening, etc., may be required by the Staff/Faculty Health Service physician in consultation with the University veterinarian.

iv) The Preventative Health Program is subject to annual review.