

<p style="text-align: center;">University of North Carolina at Greensboro Animal Facility</p>
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Animal Bites and Scratches Guidelines

Bites and scratches can expose animal technicians and research and teaching personnel to biological hazards transmitted through contaminated saliva, secretions, or blood. These injuries are largely preventable through proper training in animal handling techniques. Inappropriate handling can induce discomfort, pain, and distress, provoking an animal to inflict injury on its handler. Anybody picking up or restraining an animal must be trained in proper handling techniques and should have a current tetanus immunization. Intractable animals might have to be sedated before they are physically restrained.

Laboratory Mice and Rats:

Modern laboratory mice are bred to exclude all zoonotic agents. Therefore, there is limited concern for disease from these research mice. There is, however, always concern about secondary infections that can occur with bites and scratches. Common skin, intestinal, and soil bacteria present on you or the animal can infect the scratch or bite wound and cause these secondary infections. Thus, you should handle all mice with care and always perform first aid and seek medical consultation for severe wounds that appear to be infected.

Historically, rats have been known to carry a bacterium that causes Rat-Bite Fever. However, these bacteria have not been found in laboratory rats for decades due to the special efforts of commercial suppliers to eliminate the bacteria from breeding colonies.

Safety Precautions:

Proper work practices reduce the chances of injury and infection. When working with animals:

- Exercise caution at all times.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Know how to handle and properly restrain the animal you are working with.
- Work with at least one other person when handling fractious animals.

First Aid for Animal Bites and Scratches:

- Anyone bite or scratched in the Facility should take immediate steps to contain the situation.
- Massage wound immediately to make it bleed and to express possible contamination.
- Cleanse and irrigate the wound with soap and running water for at least 15 minutes. Use disinfectants and bandages located in the First Aid kits located in the Animal Facility.
- The individual should notify his or her immediate supervisor.
- **If the injury does not require professional medical care, then the [Animal Facility Injury form](https://integrity.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Animal-Facility-Injury-form-2020.pdf) (<https://integrity.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Animal-Facility-Injury-form-2020.pdf>) should be completed.**
- If the injury requires professional medical care, then the person must complete the appropriate forms:
 - [HRS301](https://hrs.uncg.edu/wp-content/themes/uncgwp/Files/Workers_Comp/Form-301_Accident-Injury-Illness_Investigation_Report.docx) (https://hrs.uncg.edu/wp-content/themes/uncgwp/Files/Workers_Comp/Form-301_Accident-Injury-Illness_Investigation_Report.docx)
 - [Injury Data Collection Form](https://hrs.uncg.edu/wp-content/themes/uncgwp/Files/Workers_Comp/Injury%20Data%20Collection%20Form.pdf) (https://hrs.uncg.edu/wp-content/themes/uncgwp/Files/Workers_Comp/Injury%20Data%20Collection%20Form.pdf)

Completed forms should be returned to the supervisor for completion and distribution.

- Details of this policy are outlined at <https://safety.uncg.edu/resources/workplace-safety/>
- The University's Workers' Compensation information can be found at <https://hrs.uncg.edu/policies/>.
- Injured students should report immediately to the Student Health Center to receive evaluation and treatment.