

Working with Ferrets

Animal Use Medical Screening (AUMS):

All personnel working with animals, their tissues, or working in areas where animals are housed must submit an Animal Use Medical Screening (AUMS) form every 3 years to screen for exposure to possible health hazards in the work environment. Complete the form online at:

<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/research-lab/animal-use-medical-screening-aums>

Potential zoonotic diseases from ferrets:

See *Appendix A: Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Ferrets* for a list of possible zoonotic diseases.

Preventative measures:

- Tetanus booster should be obtained every 10 years.
- The need for rabies immunization for persons working with quarantined animals must be evaluated by the Occupational Health Nurse. Contact the UW [Employee Health Center](#) at 206-685-1026.
- Only trained personnel should handle the ferrets.
- Wear appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE). Wear protective gloves when handling the animals. Wash hands thoroughly upon completion of the tasks with the animal and upon removal of the glove/PPE. Use antiseptic hand sanitizer between glove use if needed, until you can get to handwashing facilities.

Injuries:

- See the [EH&S Exposure Response Poster](#).
- Immediately wash area thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 minutes.
- Control any bleeding and cover with protective dressing (bandage, etc.)
- For any injuries, needlestick/sharps injury or for signs/symptoms of wound infection such as redness, swelling or pain, contact the Employee Health Center at 206-685-1026. After hours or if the clinic is unavailable, go to the [UWMC Emergency Department](#). For incidents at Harborview, call the Harborview Employee Health Services at 206-744-3081. After hours, go to the [Emergency Department at Harborview](#).
- Report injuries on the UW Online Accident Reporting System (OARS) at: <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/workplace/accident-and-injury-reporting>

Illness:

- If you develop signs or symptoms that you think may be related to your work with animals and/or research work, contact the Employee Health Center.
- If you see your own provider, inform him/her that you work with these animals and any other pertinent information regarding your research work. Inform Employee Health after seeing your healthcare provider.

- Report work-related illness on the UW Online Accident Reporting System (OARS) at: <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/workplace/accident-and-injury-reporting>

Allergies:

If you suspect you may be experiencing allergy symptoms, such as runny nose and sneezing (allergic rhinitis), irritation and tearing of eyes (allergic conjunctivitis), asthma, or skin rash (atopic dermatitis), contact the Employee Health Center. Those who already have asthma and/or other allergies are at an increased risk.

References:

- UW Research and Occupational Health webpage: <https://www.ehs.washington.edu/research-lab/research-occupational-health>
- University of California Davis Zoonosis Information by Species webpage: <http://safetyservices.ucdavis.edu/ps/occh/acuohp/pem/zis>
- Washington State University Zoonotic Diseases webpage: <https://iacuc.wsu.edu/zoonotic-diseases/>
- U.S. Air Force Zoonotic Diseases webpage: <http://www.phsource.us/PH/ZD/index.htm>

Contacts:

- [UW Employee Health Center](#): 206-685-1026
- Harborview Employee Health Services: 206-744-3081
- For questions on AUMS: 206-221-7770
- For questions on UW Online Accident Reporting: 206-543-7388

Appendix A: Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Ferrets

**Appendix A
 Zoonotic Disease Potentials from Ferrets**

Disease/ Infective Agent	Transmission	Disease in people
Listeriosis	Contact or aerosolization	Includes sudden onset of diarrhea, nausea, abdominal pain, and low-grade fever.
Campylobacteriosis	Fecal-oral route	Acute gastrointestinal illness with or without blood, abdominal pain, fever.
Influenza	Respiratory droplets, fomites. People can transmit to ferrets and then spread from ferrets back to people.	People with any signs of the flu should not handle ferrets.
Rat Bite Fever	Bites or scratches. Typically, this bacteria does not cause disease in ferrets.	Flu-like symptoms, rash, joint infections, or systemic disease.