

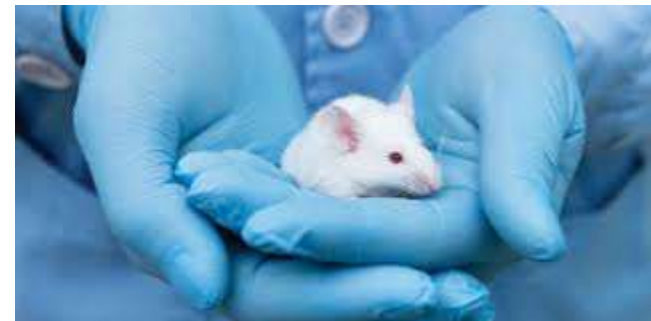
# Lab Animal Allergies

**Hazard:** Lab animal allergies (LAA) are a common health problem among lab animal workers. Surveys indicate that incidence of LAA is as high as 46% among exposed workers. Allergies most frequently develop within the first three years of exposure. The most common symptoms include rhinitis (e.g. sneezing, congestion, runny nose) conjunctivitis (red or itchy eyes), and contact urticaria (skin hives). Approximately 10% of individuals exhibiting LAA develop asthma.

Lab animal allergens can be found in dander, hair, saliva, urine, and serum of laboratory animals. Urine is the most common source of allergenic proteins. Inhalation is the primary route of exposure to animal allergens, although skin contact, eye contact and ingestion are also possible.

**Safety:** Researchers and animal handlers should take steps to protect themselves from exposure to animals and animal products. This includes:

- Performing animal manipulations within ventilated hoods or safety cabinets whenever possible.
- Reduce skin contact in inhalation by using gloves, lab coats, gowns and approved particulate respirators with face shields.
- Monitor your health for symptoms and contact University Health Services if you exhibit symptoms
- Additional PPE or alternate work practices recommended for individuals sensitized to animal allergens.



Contact the Office of Research Safety Affairs at [labsafety@uthsc.edu](mailto:labsafety@uthsc.edu) or University Health Services at 8-5630 for additional information.