

Case Western Reserve University - EHS Food & Beverage in the Laboratory Guidelines

Eating, drinking, chewing gum, applying cosmetics, taking medications, or similar activities in laboratories may result in the accidental ingestion of hazardous materials (chemical radiological, biological); therefore these activities are strictly prohibited from all Case Western Reserve University laboratory spaces. Such activities are permitted in an area (defined as a room with floor-to-ceiling walls and a closed door) separated from the laboratory space. If only going through the laboratory can access a separate area, then only covered food or beverage items may be carried through the laboratory. These requirements help prevent the ingestion of hazardous materials, which can occur by touching one's mouth with contaminated hands, eating from a container that is contaminated, eating food that has come into contact with hazardous materials accidentally.

To reduce the likelihood of ingestion of hazardous materials the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have incorporated "No Food or Drink" language into various regulations and safety manuals.

OSHA Laboratory Standard (29 C.F.R. 1910.1450, Appendix A)

(d) Eating, smoking, etc.: Avoid eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing, or application of cosmetics in areas where laboratory chemicals are present (22, 24, 32, 40); wash hands before conducting these activities (23, 24).

Avoid storage, handling, or consumption of food or beverages in storage areas, refrigerators, glassware or utensils which are also used for laboratory operations (23, 24, 226).

OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 C.F.R. 1910.1030 (d)(2)(ix) and 1910.1030(d)(2)(x))

Eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, and handling contact lenses are prohibited in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of occupational exposure.

Food and drink shall not be kept in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets or on countertops or benchtops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.

“Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL) 5th Edition”, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health, [Fifth Edition](#), Feb 2007:

Standard Microbiological Practices for Biological Safety and Animal Biological Safety levels 1, 2, 3, and 4:

Persons must wash their hands after working with potentially hazardous materials and before leaving the laboratory.

Eating, drinking, smoking, handling contact lenses, applying cosmetics, and storing food for human consumption must not be permitted in laboratory areas. Food must be stored outside the laboratory area in cabinets or refrigerators designated and used for this purpose.

General Eating and Drinking Guidelines

Additional precautions to prevent ingesting hazardous material include

- *Wash your hands before handling anything (cigarettes, chewing gum, food) that goes into your mouth. Wash your hands when you leave the laboratory.*
- *Use the water fountains for a drink--not a laboratory faucet.*
- *Remove gloves and wash your hands before using the water fountain or bathroom.*
- *Never use chemicals (salt, sugar, alcohol, bicarbonate, etc.) from the laboratory or stockroom on food.*
- *Never use laboratory glassware as a food or drink container.*
- *Never store food or drink in a laboratory refrigerator or ice machine.*
- *Never consume ice from a laboratory ice machine.*

All questions should be directed to CWRU EHS at 216.368.2907.