TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE ................................................................................................................................................ 2

2. SCOPE ...................................................................................................................................................... 2

3. ABBREVIATIONS .................................................................................................................................... 2

4. DEFINITIONS ........................................................................................................................................... 2
   4.1 UNBORN CHILD....................................................................................................................................................... 2
   4.2 DURATION.............................................................................................................................................................. 2
   4.3 FREQUENCY........................................................................................................................................................... 2
   4.4 GENETIC DISORDER ............................................................................................................................................ 2
   4.5 HAZARD ................................................................................................................................................................. 2
   4.6 TERATOGEN ........................................................................................................................................................... 2

5. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES ............................................................................................................... 3
   5.1 THE PREGNANT OR BREAST-FEEDING WOMAN ........................................................................................................... 3
   5.2 HEAD OF ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT AND SUPERVISOR ...................................................................................... 3

6. RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS ........................................................................................................ 4

7. WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION ........................................................................................ 4

8. RECORDS ................................................................................................................................................ 5

9. TOOLS ...................................................................................................................................................... 5

10. COMPLIANCE .......................................................................................................................................... 5
   10.1 LEGISLATION ...................................................................................................................................................... 5
   10.2 AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS ..................................................................................................................................... 5

11. REFERENCES ......................................................................................................................................... 5
   11.1 MONASH UNIVERSITY OHS DOCUMENTS ................................................................................................................ 5
   11.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................................................ 5

12. DOCUMENT HISTORY ............................................................................................................................ 6
1. **PURPOSE**

This procedure sets out the risks that must be considered and appropriately controlled by pregnant or breast-feeding women whose work or study involves the use of chemicals, biologicals or animals.

2. **SCOPE**

This procedure applies to pregnant or breast-feeding women at Monash University.

3. **ABBREVIATIONS**

(M)SDS  (Material) Safety Data Sheet
OH&S    Monash Occupational Health & Safety
OHS     Occupational health and safety

4. **DEFINITIONS**

A comprehensive list of definitions is provided in the [Definitions Tool](http://www.monash.edu.au/ohs). Definitions specific to this procedure are as follows.

4.1 **UNBORN CHILD**

An unborn child may be an embryo which is defined as an unborn child up to 8 weeks after conception or a foetus which is defined as an unborn child from 8 weeks to birth.

4.2 **DURATION**

How long you perform the activity that can expose you to the hazard.

4.3 **FREQUENCY**

How often you perform the activity that can expose you to the hazard.

4.4 **GENETIC DISORDER**

Genetic disorders of the parents or certain genes carried by the parents and chromosome aberrations that occur during the development of the embryo, may result in genetic diseases in the child such as Huntington's chorea, sickle cell anaemia, Down's syndrome and cystic fibrosis. It is estimated that genetic disorders are responsible for 25% of malformations in unborn children.

4.5 **HAZARD**

An OHS hazard is anything that has the potential to cause injury or illness to a person.

4.6 **TERATOGEN**

Teratogens (from the Greek words *teras* or *teratos*, meaning monster) are agents that cause congenital malformations, growth retardation, functional disorder and sometimes death in the embryo or foetus.

As a general rule a substance is considered to be a teratogen if it has adverse effects on the unborn child at doses below where there are adverse effects on the mother.

It should be emphasised that most drugs and chemicals can be shown to cause adverse effects to the embryo or foetus (often the only data available is on animals), at high doses, under laboratory conditions. However, it does not follow that most drugs or chemicals are considered to be teratogens.
5. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided in the OHS Roles, Committees and Responsibilities procedure. The specific responsibilities with respect to this procedure are summarised below.

5.1 THE PREGNANT OR BREAST-FEEDING WOMAN

Women at Monash University who are either pregnant, considering pregnancy or breast-feeding must:

- Read this procedure and seek out any other relevant information provided on the OH&S website or by OH&S staff such as the Occupational Health Physician or Occupational Nurse Consultants.
- Seek out and read local information pertaining to their area.
- Declare their pregnancy to their supervisor, Safety officer, Biosafety officer, OHS Consultant/Advisor or Head of academic/administrative unit at the earliest possible time, on the understanding that the matter will be kept as confidential as possible.
- Must seek advice from the OHS Health team at the earliest possible time. Such consultations are strictly confidential.
- Minimise their exposure to chemical and biological materials and animals as much as possible by cooperating fully in any effort that is made to fairly and sensibly modify their duties in order to minimise these risks.
- Report immediately any suspected high exposures to their supervisor, Safety officer, Biosafety officer, OHS Consultant/Advisor or the OHS Health team.

5.2 HEAD OF ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT AND SUPERVISOR

The Head of the academic/administrative unit and the supervisor must:

- Make it clear to women who declare pregnancy that subject to meeting university OHS requirements, the woman may choose whether or not to:
  - work with chemicals, biologicals or animals during the pregnancy, and/or
  - work with chemicals, biologicals or animals during breast-feeding.
  without fear of this decision impacting on their career progression/continuation.
- Where the woman elects to continue working with:
  - chemicals, biologicals or animals during pregnancy, or
  - chemicals, biologicals or animals during breast-feeding,
  review, in conjunction with OH&S, appropriate risk assessments and put in place control measures to reduce these risks to a negligible level (where no significant risk is foreseeable).
- Facilitate, in accordance with current workplace agreements, the modification of a woman’s duties in accordance with special needs during pregnancy or breast-feeding.
- Create an environment where:
  - All people who work with chemicals, biologicals or animals, particularly women, understand the requirements of this procedure.
  - Women who work with chemicals, biologicals or animals feel comfortable to declare their pregnancy and/or breast-feeding.
Both male and female co-workers and supervisors understand the special needs of a pregnant woman’s unborn child or breast-fed child in relation to chemical or biological safety or work with animals.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESS

- The types of hazards that must be considered are:
  - Chemicals
  - Biological materials
  - Animals
- Determine the duration and frequency that you will be exposed to the identified hazard.
- Speak with your supervisor, Safety officer, Biosafety officer, OHS Consultant/Advisor or the OHS Health team to discuss the hazards and seek advice on controlling the hazards.
- Complete a risk assessment following the OHS Risk management procedure, using the Risk management program.
- Based on the level of risk to the unborn or breast-fed child that has been identified in the risk assessment, consult with your supervisor and the OHS Health team to determine if the level of risk associated with the activity is acceptable.
- Implement any controls that are identified as required and monitor the activities performed for any variation to the activities that may alter the hazard or risk to the unborn or breast-fed child.

7. WHERE TO FIND FURTHER INFORMATION

Toxicological information for a chemical can be obtained from:
- the (Material) Safety Data Sheet ((M)SDS);
- the labels on chemical containers. These should contain statements which mention the ‘unborn child’ or ‘pregnancy’.

Information on biological agents or substances derived from animals:
- the (Material) Safety Data Sheet ((M)SDS);
- books, your attending doctor or the OH&S website.

The following terms, which indicate potential effects on the unborn child, may be used:
- Embryotoxic – meaning toxic to the embryo
- Fetotoxic/foetotoxic – meaning toxic to the foetus
- Teratogenic – meaning that it induces developmental abnormalities in the foetus
8. RECORDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record to be kept by</th>
<th>Records</th>
<th>To be kept for:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic/administrative unit/</td>
<td>Risk assessments</td>
<td>3 years or until reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OH&amp;S health team (confidential files)</td>
<td>Medical consultation records</td>
<td>100 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. TOOLS

The following tools are associated with this procedure.

- [Pregnancy and work OHS information sheet](http://www.monash.edu.au/ohs)

10. COMPLIANCE

This procedure is written to meet the requirements of:

10.1 LEGISLATION

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 (Vic)

10.2 AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS


11. REFERENCES

11.1 MONASH UNIVERSITY OHS DOCUMENTS

Health surveillance at Monash University
Job Safety Analysis
OHS risk management at Monash University
Risk Control Program

11.2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following documents were used as references in the development of this procedure:

- American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH), *Documentation of the Threshold Limit Values and Biological Exposure Indices*, Sixth Edition, 1996.
11. LITERATURE REFERENCES


12. DOCUMENT HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version number</th>
<th>Date of first Issue</th>
<th>Changes made to document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>November 2010</td>
<td>Procedures for protecting unborn and breast-fed children from the effects of maternal exposure to chemicals, biologicals and animals, v.2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3              | November 2014       | 1. Removed reference to legislative compliance from purpose and added this to compliance section.  
2. Shortened wording of purpose and scope sections to align with other OHS procedures.  
3. Updated Definitions section to only include definitions specific to this procedure.  
4. Deleted ‘Overview’ section, as this is not procedural.  
5. Removed generic information from ‘Risk management’ section and included specific process for assessing risks to pregnant or breast-feeding women.  
6. Deleted reference to ionising radiation, as this is covered in separate procedure.  
7. Added Tools section.  
8. Added Compliance section. |