

COVID-19 / Coronavirus Considerations for Animal Research

UNTHSC guidance for UNTHSC investigators in regards to recent events concerning COVID-19.

What do I need to know about conducting animal research that is currently approved by the UNTHSC IACUC?

As referenced in the guidance issued by the UNTHSC Vice President for Research on March 17, 2020:

- *Individual IACUC-approved research activities with animals may continue while the University remains open with limited operating personnel.*
- *The Department of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM) has standard emergency operating procedures that will be implemented as needed.*
- *If DLAM personnel are personally impacted by this situation, it may limit access to the DLAM facilities. If this happens, you will receive additional information from DLAM.*

In addition, the following is general guidance about research activity:

- All researchers should consider the impact of their research activity on the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Tarrant County has issued a Shelter in Place notice. Please contact your respective Dean to request access to the campus for administering care for your animals.
- Individual investigators should develop their own contingency and research continuity plans, especially for specialty irreplaceable animals, or animals on chronic studies. Please note that compliance must be upheld while making contingency and research continuity plans.
- Please be respectful towards DLAM Staff, as the care and welfare of the animals is of great importance.

Please check the [CDC website](#) for guidance related to COVID-19. Please check the [UNTHSC Website](#) for specific updates related to COVID-19 regarding UNTHSC.

Will the UNTHSC IACUC office continue normal operations?

The IACUC Administrators are working from home, but are available for normal activities and can be contacted by email:

- Christina Aguilar (Christina.Aguilar@unthsc.edu)
- Anna Laurent (Anna.Laurent@unthsc.edu)

Will COVID-19 affect the IACUC submission deadlines and meeting dates?

The IACUC will maintain the submission deadlines and meeting dates during this time, and will meet remotely (via teleconference/ videoconference) to ensure continuing oversight and programmatic activities. The submission deadline and meeting dates can be found on the [UNTHSC IACUC Website](#).

How will I make changes to my approved IACUC protocol?

The IACUC Office is working from home, but available for normal activities. Please submit amendment forms via email to the IACUC Administrators (contact information listed above).

What if I need to access my approved IACUC protocol remotely?

The IACUC Office is working from home, but available for normal activities. Please submit a request via email to the IACUC Administrators (contact information listed above).

What if my protocol renewal is due?

Please be sure to submit renewals at the appropriate times to avoid disruption in the study. Please note that if a protocol expires, animals will immediately be placed on a holding protocol in which no animal work may occur, until the renewal protocol is approved.

Other Guidance:

- OLAW updated guidance in [FAQ G9](#). “How can institutions and their IACUCs best prepare for a pandemic?”
- OLAW published a [webinar](#) entitled, “Pandemic Contingency Planning and Its Impact on Animal Care”
- Protection against compassion fatigue: AALAS Brochure: [Cost of Caring](#).
- We recognize that this time of uncertainty can place an unexpected emotional toll, UNTHSC has the [Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#) as resource available to all employees.