YALE UNIVERSITY POLICY ON EATING, DRINKING OR SMOKING IN LABORATORIES

In many laboratories at Yale, researchers work with radioisotopes, biological agents or hazardous chemicals that can be harmful if ingested. Food, drink or other materials can become contaminated in the laboratory, and ingestion of contaminated materials places individuals at unnecessarily increased risk. For this reason, a basic tenet of safety in the laboratory, and a basic regulation of both the NRC and OSHA, is the prohibition of eating, drinking, and smoking in laboratories.

Eating, drinking and smoking are prohibited in laboratories where radioisotopes, biological agents or hazardous chemicals are used, handled, or stored except as provided below.

This prohibition applies to an entire laboratory, not merely to areas within the laboratory where hazardous materials are used. This prohibition includes study carrels and desks that are not physically separated from the work area by floor-to-ceiling walls with doors that close, even if the space is not used for work with hazardous materials.

This prohibition does not apply to space associated with laboratories (such as an interior office) that is physically separated form the laboratory area by floor-to-ceiling walls with doors which will close, and in which hazardous materials are never used or stored.*

In areas where eating and drinking are prohibited, food and beverages (and empty food and beverage containers) may not be stored, left or discarded. Government regulators and University Safety personnel may regard discarded food or beverage containers in a laboratory as evidence of eating or drinking in the laboratory.

Food or drink may be moved through a laboratory only if the food or beverage is wrapped or in a covered container.

Note* In Biosafety level 3 laboratories, the prohibition applies to all areas, including interior offices and similar spaces even they are separated by such barriers.