





# Animals (dead) and animal parts

See also CLEAPSS Student Safety Sheet 71: Sharps.

Source	Hazard	Comment
<p><b>Animals (whole)</b> (fresh or recently-defrosted from frozen), eg whole rats, mice, fish  and <b>organs</b> such as eyes, hearts, kidneys, lungs, and chicken's feet/legs  and <b>bones.</b></p>	 <b>BIOHAZARD</b>	<p>Whole animals obtained from a reputable biological supplier should be safe to use; but road kill, for example, might be infected. Items intended for human consumption, available from butchers, abattoirs and fishmongers, should also be safe. Because of the risk of BSE it would only be legal to supply cattle eyes (or brain tissue) from animals slaughtered at less than 12 months or eyes of sheep and goats from animals slaughtered at less than 12 months or with at least one erupted incisor.</p> <p>If only bones are to be studied, and especially if they are to be kept, use a knife to remove as much flesh as possible. Place the bones in a saucepan of water to which sodium carbonate is added and <i>simmer</i> until the remaining flesh can easily be removed, using an old brush. Return to the pan for more simmering until the bones are cleaned.</p> <p>Some people have cultural or religious objections to handling particular species.</p> <p>Some people object to killing animals, whether for food, medical research or dissection in schools. Fewer people object to the use of material intended for human consumption available from butchers, abattoirs and fishmongers.</p>
<p><b>Animal parts (preserved)</b></p>	 <b>HEALTH HAZARD</b>   <b>HARMFUL</b>	<p>In the past, specimens were preserved in 1.3 M (4%) methanal solution (formalin) (see CLEAPSS Student Safety Sheet 67). Formalin-free preservatives are mostly used now, but formalin will still have been used professionally as a fixing agent.</p> <p>Sometimes 70% ethanol or propanol solutions are used (see CLEAPSS Student Safety Sheets 60 and 66).</p> <p>Preservative should always be rinsed off before use, preferably soaking for an hour in water. However, preservative may still remain in body cavities, which must be rinsed as soon as they are exposed.</p>
<p><b>Dissection</b></p>	 <b>DANGER</b>	<p>See CLEAPSS Student Safety Sheet 71: Sharps.</p>

## Typical control measures to reduce risk

- Use material from reliable sources.
- Wash preserved material prior to dissection and rinse it if body cavities are exposed during dissection.
- Wear eye protection when cutting bone or cartilage, using preserved material or changing scalpel blades.
- Count sharps at the beginning and end of the lesson and carry around in a safe manner.

## Assessing the risks

- **What are the details of the activity to be undertaken? What are the hazards?**
- **What is the chance of something going wrong?**
- **How serious would it be if something did go wrong?**
- **How can the risk(s) be controlled for this activity?**  
eg, can it be done safely? Does the procedure need to be altered?

## Emergency action

- **Animal material in the eye** Flood the eye with gently-running tap water for 10 minutes. If discomfort persists, consult a medic.