

University of Georgia Veterinary Teaching Hospital Policy on eating and drinking in the hospital

Summer, 2010

Note: These recommendations were generated by the Infectious Disease Committee and submitted to the previous Dean in 2003. In 2009 they were reevaluated by current members of the Infectious Disease Committee, who confirmed their support of these recommendations with minor modifications to reflect changes made since 2003, and the addition of an addendum (p. 2).

Guiding Principles: Eating and drinking in areas potentially contaminated with pathogens is a health risk. Proper hygiene is considered critical in prevention of zoonoses. Eating and drinking in a laboratory setting (hospital environment) is contrary to good laboratory practice and regulatory recommendations. The vast majority of faculty and staff appreciate that eating and drinking in the hospital is careless and unprofessional. This behavior has become culturally accepted because of increasing patient/work responsibilities combined with inadequate facilities. Student and staff conform to faculty behavior.

Compliance Problems:

1. Hospital culture dictates that patient care supersedes the biologic needs of attending faculty, staff and students.
2. Current allocation of expertise and resources is not perceived to provide an opportunity for timely breaks and therefore substantiates eating and drinking on the clinic floor. Faculty, residents and interns model and condone student behavior.
3. The current hospital facility is approximately 30% the size of sister institutions with similar teaching and service loads. The Hospital ineffectively separates public and treatment areas and the College lacks sufficient food services/eating areas to properly support the current or future work force.

Recommendations:

1. There is to be absolutely no eating or drinking (other than water fountains) in the small animal hospital (area accessible by key card entry on the first floor), no exceptions.
2. There is to be absolutely no eating or drinking (other than water fountains) in the large animal hospital. The client reception area and conference room in the large animal hospital has an outside entrance and can be used for eating and drinking. One technician room in the LA hospital and one rounds room are designated for allowing food and drink near the LA hospital. Signs should be added that food and drinks should not be removed from these areas and to wash hands after handling animals and before eating or drinking.
3. Add seating areas on second floor to increase eating/drinking facilities.

4. Investigate atrium type cover for library deck to facilitate its use as an eating/break space for the College. If covering the deck is not possible, develop alternative eating/break area.
5. Faculty and students will work on the computer or records while eating. Encourage the use of reading/rounds rooms on the second floor where eating/drinking is allowed.
6. Improve student awareness that the second floor eating/break areas should be used.
7. Food deliveries to the small animal hospital should be taken to an area approved for eating and drinking.
8. After hour deliveries for the LA hospital should be to the reception door only.
9. Ensure that waterless hand sanitizers at entry points to Dawg Bone are regularly filled and confirmed to be functional.
10. Provide refrigerator space on the second floor for clinic staff.
11. Client food gifts: Encourage delivery of sealed food gifts for SA faculty/student/staff accepted by reception staff with receiving group to open and consume food only in designated, non-hospital areas.
12. Incorporate eating and drinking policy into visitor information sheets.
13. Dean/Administrative Council to establish enforcement guidelines for faculty, staff and students who violate eating and drinking in hospital policy.
14. Protocols should be reviewed and updated as needed but not less than once per year.

Addendum

While the Infectious Disease Committee supports these recommendations, the members recognize that limitations of current hospital facilities and a continued culture of placing work above the needs of individuals to leave the clinic floor to eat and drink has led to frustration on the part of some who try to observe these recommendations. It is the opinion of the committee that these recommendations are necessary to ensure a sanitary and safe environment for humans and animal patients. The committee urges that the new hospital facility which is projected for construction in the near future be designed with attention to the need for easily accessible facilities for eating and drinking which are not contiguous with patient care areas.