

How to End Animal Testing

More than 100 million animals are bred, used and disposed of as hazardous waste in research and product testing in the U.S. every year. These millions of animals experience great physical and mental suffering, and there are few laws that protect them.

Every day, millions of animals are poisoned, physically assaulted, have toxic chemicals sprayed into their eyes or wiped onto their skin, or forced into their mouths where they ingest them.

These high doses of chemicals are a thousand times stronger than humans would ever encounter. Lab animals live in isolation in cold and barren stainless steel cages, where they are denied comfort, they are refused social contact and stimulation, never see the daylight, sunlight or breathe fresh air—and live in constant fear of the next experiment, until they are killed.

There is a growing body of scientific literature and research studies' critically evaluating and questioning the validity of animal experimentation that raises important concerns about their reliability and predictive value for people and for understanding human physiology.

The lack of reliability, lack of accuracy, the high cost, and the time-consuming nature of animal experimentation across a wide range of areas undermines scientific arguments in favor of the practice.

Additionally, animal experimentation often significantly harms humans through misleading and inaccurate studies that could be replaced with more effective and accurate non-animal testing methods.

The resulting evidence supported by the U.S. Library of Medicine and Institutes of Health suggest that the “collective harms and costs to humans from animal experimentation outweigh the potential benefits and that resources would be better invested in developing human-based testing methods.”

Today there are many predictive, cost-effective, less expensive, and faster alternatives to animal testing that are safer, more scientifically accurate, far more humane, and deliver more precise results. Scientific experts recommend a complete shift away from animal testing. It's time to change the future of laboratory testing by using non-animal research methods.

What Animals Experience

Animals used in laboratories have nervous systems so they feel pain and can suffer; they are conscious and sentient like humans; and as their caretakers we have a moral obligation not to impose unnecessary suffering, harm, pain or injury to them. But for the millions and millions of animals used in research procedures, they experience deep physical, emotional and mental stress, pain and trauma; are never given pain killers or anesthesia during or following their procedures; and when they are anesthetized and killed because they never recover from their procedure—they are categorized as “unclassified” and are not recorded or documented.

The Moral Argument Against Animal Testing

It is not morally acceptable or justified to inflict suffering, endless institutional cruelty, and death to vulnerable sentient animals on a daily basis when there are many more viable and effective alternative testing methods today—and testing on animals is no longer necessary.

We do not have the right to inflict this level of suffering on those who are at our mercy. Animals in labs are treated like property or commodities, the same justification that was used for centuries for human slavery, using women as property, children as property, and using and abusing less advantaged people.

So if there is going to be meaningful change in the way we treat animals, then we need to accept that animal slavery is wrong, and that violence to animals in laboratories is essentially institutional exploitation sanctioned by the federal government and corporations for profit, producing unreliable, unpredictable and flawed results.

How Consumers Can Make a Difference

However, we as consumers are also responsible. We are the ones who demand and consume animals and animal-tested products. We are responsible for buying and supporting the products tested on animals, and we have the power and choice to stop consuming animal products and buying products that are tested on animals.

If we don't buy animal-tested products, and instead buy only cruelty-free products not tested on animals—then we are doing our part to fight the cruelty of animal testing. If we truly care about animals, we must choose to buy and support the brands, products and companies that do not test on animals nor use ingredients that have been tested on animals.

What is Animal Experimentation?

The terms animal testing, animal experimentation, animal research, in vivo testing and vivisection are all terms used to describe animal experimentation, for education, training, medical and biological research, cosmetic testing, and chemical testing. Vivisection means dissecting or cutting into a living animal.

The Problem

No matter how much testing has been conducted on animals, humans are always the real guinea pigs. And animal physiology is very different from human physiology, so there is no guarantee that animal-tested drugs are safe or efficacious because we cannot accurately deduce the results produced in rats, pigs or dogs—for humans. Our biology is just not the same. Some drugs that have been approved through animal testing have caused serious and unexpected side effects, irreparable harm and sometimes death for humans.

Many drugs or medications were withdrawn from the market because they posed a very high risk to patients or could cause serious adverse reactions. More than 50 FDA-approved drugs have been removed from the market or relabeled due to their danger to human health, and even more have been recalled by the FDA. How safe is America's drug safety system and the FDA that approves drugs? Millions of Americans are exposed to potentially unsafe drugs each year, and yet all these drugs have passed animal tests. Animal testing compromises drug safety and toxicity safety, when there are much more accurate alternatives today.

How Many Animals?

Today in the U.S., over 100 million animals ranging from small to large size animals undergo extremely painful procedures in research and testing laboratories every day. In 2010, 1.37 million animals were used excluding rats and mice, which constitutes 90 percent of all research animals. In the U.K. in 2011, over 3 million animals were used for animal testing.

And in the EU similar numbers were used, often testing the same brands, products and chemicals. Dogs, cats and primates are most commonly used as models for human diseases in cardiology, endocrinology, bone and joint studies. Cats are most commonly used in neurological research. Most research animals come from breeders, but some can come from the wild or from animal auctions. See the latest facts and figures.

There's No Protection For Laboratory Animals

There are no laws in the U.S. that prohibit conducting any animal experiment, no matter how painful or deadly. The Animal Welfare Act (AWA), a federal law designed to protect animals in laboratories, is rarely enforced and often ignored, and it does not protect or cover farmed animals, birds, mice or rats, or reptiles. Under the AWA, animals can be electrically shocked, burned, starved, injured, psychologically tormented and killed.

Under the federal Animal Welfare Act, primates are supposed to receive some psychological stimulation while we use them in horrific experiments in which we infect them with diseases or try to determine how much radiation they can endure before they become dysfunctional. Plus, it's perfectly acceptable to force laboratory animals to live in strict confinement where they can barely move, live in isolation and alone, inside barren and cold steel cages, that are void of enrichment and any comfort at all.

They are prevented from expressing normal behaviors, or being mobile, or having any social interaction. Animals in labs are treated like disposable things or "units" where their basic needs and interests are ignored and violated every day.

Ending Laboratory Testing on Animals for Cosmetics

Cosmetic testing on animals is particularly controversial. Increasingly governments throughout the world are eliminating the use of animals in cosmetics testing. The European Union imposed a ban in 2013, where cosmetics tested on animals can no longer be sold in Europe, even if the testing was done outside of Europe.

Since then, many major companies have stopped testing cosmetics on animals. Other countries that have banned cosmetic testing include Australia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Belgium, India, Taiwan and the U.K. Several other countries are moving toward similar bans now including Israel, Norway and Brazil.

In the U.S., a bill called the Humane Cosmetics Act (H.R. 2858) was introduced by Representatives Martha McSally (R -AZ), Don Beyer (D-VA), Joe Heck (R -NV) and Tony Cardenas (D-CA), to make it illegal to conduct animal testing for cosmetics after a one-year phase in, followed by a banning of the import and sale of products and ingredients that were made using animal testing within three years.

It's time for the U.S. to catch up with the E.U. and U.K. and all the countries that have already committed to ending this inhumane, archaic and cruel practice, that is completely outdated.

Animal Testing in Toxic Substances & Chemicals

In 2016, Congress approved and President Obama signed the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, which will dramatically reduce animal testing in the U.S. These landmark provisions will not only reduce, but ultimately replace the use of live animals for testing of tens of thousands of chemicals, pesticides, biocides, and other potentially dangerous, hazardous substances.

The bill was sponsored by Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and David Vitter (R-LA), to minimize animal testing and create a clear preference for the development and use of alternative methods and strategies. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a plan to phase out at least some obsolete animal testing practices.

Alternatives to Animal Testing

Alternatives to animal testing are safer, more scientific, more humane—and are much better for the environment. Scientists argue that ending the use of animals in testing will actually increase the quality and accuracy of testing results. The scientific community has been highly critical of animal testing as having unreliable and unpredictable results for people, and they have instead advocated for new and better methods like vitro methods, that are more predictive, cost-effective and accurate.

Today, scientists are developing in vitro methodologies and new cell and tissue tests that model human cells, body tissue and body parts using human cells that act and respond exactly like they would inside the human body. Scientists have engineered brains, artificial skin, bone marrow, and study tumors—using computers to test drugs. Computer modeling and high speed computer simulations are faster, more reliable, and less expensive than animal testing—and of course are cruelty free.

Quantum pharmacology uses methods of theoretical chemistry and quantum mechanics as well as computer modeling for studying drug molecular structure and drug interactions. Cosmetic companies can ensure product safety today without using animal tests on any phase of their product development.

In addition to replacing animals, there is also a “reduction” of the use of animals by avoiding the repetition of same tests conducted by different companies, and with the use of the computer there is improved sharing of data.

Lastly, another alternative is the use of “refinement” methods, which relate to minimizing pain and suffering and distress, by using non-invasive techniques or pain relief.