



Helping Canadians Help Animals

Canadian Federation of Humane Societies (CFHS)

Fédération des sociétés canadiennes d'assistance aux animaux (FSCAA)

Alternatives to Animal Testing

Although the CFHS recognizes that many improvements have been made to ensure that a minimum number of animals are used in medical and cosmetic testing and research, we would like to see more alternatives used, particularly for cosmetic testing where the use of animals is not required by law.

There are several non-animal research models that can also be used to help scientists and researchers limit the number of animals used in testing. While these models can never replace animals used for medical testing, which requires that the effects of drugs and diseases be seen working in a complete body system, they can help reduce their use.

According to Health Canada, "It is often important to understand how the body as a whole functions under certain conditions, including how repair and defence mechanisms operate in the whole animal. In order to conduct studies in a living body, researchers must use animals whose systems closely resemble those of humans."

For this reason non-animal models cannot completely eliminate the use of animals in testing. However, several non-animal models have helped reduce the number of animals used.

Epidemiological studies, also known as population studies, look at the link between someone's lifestyle – including factors such as diet, habits, and occupation – and disease. These studies help researchers connect cause-and-effect relationships between lifestyle and disease without doing specific testing, and can help scientists gain an understanding of diseases to help decrease the use of animals.

Computer Models: Computer models can be used to simulate diseases and to help scientists understand the way different substances can be used to treat disease. The models are based on existing information and data and can help researchers with information specifically relating to humans.

Cell and Tissue Culture (In Vitro Testing): Samples of human cells and tissues can be used in laboratories to test a substance in a certain type of cell or tissue. It is relatively low-cost and is beneficial because it provides researchers with information specifically relating to humans.

Cell and tissue cultures are grown outside of the living organism, creating an artificial environment for toxicology testing. However, using cell and tissue cultures does not allow a researcher to see the effect of a substance in a living body with all its complexities. This method is valuable for research and can help limit the use of animals, but can't replace them entirely.

The CFHS encourages the use of [non-animal models](#) wherever possible. When animals must be used, we encourage that the fewest possible number be used.

[Read the CFHS' policy on animals in research here.](#)

URL » http://cfhs.ca/research/alternatives_to_animal_testing

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