

# Safety in the Lab

By Patti Hutchison

<sup>1</sup> Plastic, penicillin, and rubber- what do they all have in common? They were all made in a laboratory. In fact, most historic scientific discoveries happened in a laboratory. Chances are you will be working in the science lab this year. You will be performing experiments and using equipment that scientists use. It is important to practice safety in the lab. Here are some important tips to keep in mind.

<sup>2</sup> The most important safety rule is to always follow instructions. These may be instructions your teacher gives you. They might even be instructions that you have to read in a book or manual. Always follow directions exactly as stated. Even if you think you know a "better" way to do something, do it the way the directions tell you.

<sup>3</sup> Reread instructions several times. If you don't understand something, ask your teacher to explain it to you. Your grandmother would say, "It's better to be safe than sorry." This means that if you get hurt in the lab, you'll be sorry that you didn't ask for help.

<sup>4</sup> You need to think about what you are wearing when you are in the lab. You should always remove loose jewelry. If you have long hair, always tie it back. You don't want to let these things touch chemicals or flames that you might be working with.

<sup>5</sup> Protect your clothing with a shop apron. You may also need to wear rubber gloves. Always wear safety goggles when you are working with any substance that can get in your eyes. Don't worry about not looking cool. Safety is more important. Besides, everyone in your class will look just like you!

<sup>6</sup> Always be careful not to spill anything when you are working in the lab. If you do spill something, ask your teacher about the proper way to clean it up. Some chemicals may harm your skin or other surfaces. Always ask about the proper way to dispose of chemicals also.

<sup>7</sup> Never mix chemicals unless you are told to. You might produce a dangerous substance. It could be poisonous or explosive. Never touch, taste, or smell a chemical you do not know. Keep lids closed when you are not using the chemicals.

<sup>8</sup> At some time, you will probably have to heat something up in the lab. Always be aware of hot surfaces. Remember that they can stay hot long after the heat source is removed. Use tools as directed by your teacher for handling hot pieces of equipment. Clamps and tongs are especially useful for handling hot test tubes.

<sup>9</sup> Sometimes you will be asked to use a scalpel or a razor blade. Handle these objects very carefully. Just as you learned in cooking class, always cut away from you. If you do get cut or hurt in any way, tell your teacher at once.

<sup>10</sup> When you are finished with your experiment, always clean up properly. Shut down all heat sources. Return all equipment to its proper place. And, of course, wash your hands!

<sup>11</sup> Working in the lab can be an exciting part of your science program. With caution and proper procedures, you will be safe and able to enjoy your lab time.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Science Pd \_\_\_\_\_

## Safety in the Lab

<p>1. What is the most important safety rule?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>2. If you don't understand something, you should:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Ask your lab partner.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Try to figure it out on your own.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Ask your teacher to explain it to you.</p>
<p>3. Why should you tie back loose hair and remove loose jewelry?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A So you can put on your shop apron</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B So that it doesn't touch chemicals or flame</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C So you look better</p>	<p>4. If you spill something, you should:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Wipe it up with your sleeve.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Ask your teacher the proper way to clean it up.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Pour water on it.</p>
<p>5. Why should you never mix chemicals unless you are told to?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>6. Hot surfaces:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Can be touched after a minute or two</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Cool down immediately</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Can stay hot long after the heat source is removed</p>

