
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

TITLE: Criteria for Early Euthanasia - Rodents
SOP NO.: 321-03
REVISION: 03
EFF. DATE: September 2009
SUPERSEDES: 321-02

APPROVALS

Prepared by (print name): Susan Fussell Dept.: ACVS

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Approved by (print name): _____ Dept.: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide guidelines for the early euthanasia of research rodents.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 Applies to all rodent used at the University of Western Ontario and affiliated institutions unless specific criteria are outlined in the AUP.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Research workers, animal care staff and managers are responsible to ensure that research animals are euthanized in accordance with these guidelines except where other criteria have been approved by the AUS.

3.2 Research workers must report any condition, disease or injury not specifically outlined in the approved AUP or conditions resulting from the protocol which are of a greater severity than anticipated.

3.3 Research staff must provide approved humane euthanasia (as per AUP) when the indicated end point, listed below, has been reached.

4.0 PROCEDURE

4.1 Monitor animals carefully. Visual monitoring is not adequate to assess body condition and dehydration. Additional monitoring requirements may be outlined in the approved AUP.

4.2 Monitor animal frequently. Unanaesthetized deaths should not occur. Animals must not become debilitated.

4.3 Criteria to be used are:

4.3.1 Weight loss.

4.3.1.1 **Adults**

A maximum of 15% of an adult's weight is permitted **or** a body condition score of 2 or less. See below. Maintaining an animal with a body condition score of 2 or lower

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requires justification and approval by the AUS.

4.3.1.2 **Juveniles**

A maximum of 15% of an age matched control **or** a body condition score of 2 or less. See below. Maintaining an animal with a body condition score of 2 or lower requires justification and approval by the AUS.

4.3.1.3 Emaciation and debilitation are not permitted. If animals are not eating well put fresh, palatable foods in the cage (ie. muffins or apples). If the animal continues to lose weight it must receive nutritional supplementation (ie. gavage or force feeding). Diet recipes are available from ACVS. Contact an ACVS veterinarian for advice on supplemental feeding.

OR

4.3.2 Dehydration. Ensure that the animal can easily reach the water. Put water containers in the cage if necessary. Provide high moisture food (apples, 'jelly jigglers'). If an animal will not drink, warm subcutaneous fluids must be provided to maintain the animal. Contact an ACVS veterinarian for advice on assessment of dehydration.

OR

4.3.3 Hunching, lethargy or piloerection.

OR

4.3.4 Any condition, as outlined in 4.3, which an ACVS veterinarian deems severe enough to warrant the euthanasia of the animal.

5.0 HEALTH & SAFETY

5.1 All pertinent SOPs with regard to animal handling must be followed.

6.0 REVISION HISTORY

Revision	Reason(s) for Revision	Initiated by
03	To include body condition score and other clarifications	Susan Fussell

7.0 REFERENCES / ASSOCIATED MATERIALS

7.1 Ullman-Cullere, M.H. and Foltz, C.J. Body Condition Scoring: A Rapid and Accurate Method for Assessing Health Status in Mice. Lab. Animal Science; **49** (3) 319-323, 1999

8.0 ATTACHMENTS

8.1 Body Condition Graphic - See page 3

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Body Condition Scoring



BC 1

Mouse is emaciated.
• *Skeletal structure extremely prominent; little or no flesh cover.*
• *Vertebrae distinctly segmented.*



BC 2

Mouse is underconditioned.
• *Segmentation of vertebral column evident.*
• *Dorsal pelvic bones are readily palpable.*



BC 3

Mouse is well-conditioned.
• *Vertebrae and dorsal pelvis not prominent; palpable with slight pressure.*



BC 4

Mouse is overconditioned.
• *Spine is a continuous column.*
• *Vertebrae palpable only with firm pressure.*



BC 5

Mouse is obese.
• *Mouse is smooth and bulky.*
• *Bone structure disappears under flesh and subcutaneous fat.*

A "+" or a "-" can be added to the body condition score if additional increments are necessary (i.e. ...2+, 2, 2-...)