

## FLSC Standard Operating Procedure for the Removal of Metal Ear Tags in Rodents

### Purpose

On occasion metal ear tags can cause irritation and swelling of the ear. In animals with ulcerative dermatitis, excoriation can cause infection of the pinna. These conditions are exacerbated with the presence of the ear tag. To treat the swelling and possible infection it is beneficial to remove the ear tag. In some cases imaging methods necessitate ear tag removal. The following method has been developed to remove the tag without causing additional trauma to the ear.

### Supplies

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Straight hemostat              | Small wire cutters                               |
| Cotton tipped applicator stick | Triple antibiotic ointment                       |
| Isoflurane                     | Anesthetic bell jar                              |
| Cotton ball                    | Iodine solution (Povidine/Betadine/tamed iodine) |

### Procedure

1. Either anesthetize the animal in a bell jar according to FLSC procedures or manually restrain depending on the genotype/strain of the animal and the severity of the ear tag irritation.
2. Wipe the ear and ear tag with a cotton-tipped applicator stick saturated with 1% iodine solution to remove debris.
3. Hold the ear tag between the thumb and index finger, positioned so that the fingers do not put pressure on the flat of the tag. This avoids pinching the ear between the flat surfaces of the tag.
4. Cut across the top of the ear tag loop with the wire cutters from edge to edge, not across the flat sides of the tag.
5. Try not to apply torque while cutting to avoid tearing the ear.
6. Using the hemostats spread the cut ends of the ear tag apart.
7. Gently guide the ear tag through and out of the ear using the hemostats.
8. Slip the tag out so that the crimped end does not pass through the ear reducing trauma and to avoid enlarging the area pierced.
9. Once the tag is gone, wipe the ear again with the iodine soaked cotton-applicator stick. If there is a purulent discharge from the ear apply triple antibiotic ointment to the affected areas.
10. Follow up treatment may be necessary. Animals with a purulent discharge are referred to the Veterinary staff for assessment.