

# University of Notre Dame IACUC Standard Operating Procedure for Isolation of Sick Animals

## Introduction

Infectious pathogens of laboratory animals can cause severe disease and have deleterious effects on research. For these reasons, it is critical that any animals demonstrating clinical signs suggestive of infectious disease be isolated from other, susceptible animals. The procedures described here detail the steps to be taken in such circumstances.

## Procedures

1. Any animal that displays abnormal behavioral or physical signs should be reported to the Attending Veterinarian. Such signs may include, but not be limited to diarrhea, harsh respiration, lethargy, aggression, head tilt, fur loss, unkempt appearance, anorexia, weight loss, and nasal or ocular discharge.
2. An Animal Illness/Injury Report or Veterinary Care Card should be posted on the room/cubicle door or in the cage card holder according to the IACUC Program of Veterinary Care: Reporting Sick Rodents and Follow-up Care, or the IACUC Program of Veterinary Care (USDA Covered Species and Amphibians): Reporting Sick Animals and Follow-up Care. The cage should indicate that the animal(s) are under isolation.
3. If warranted, the animal may be placed into isolation. This will involve placing the animal in a cage by itself or with other similarly affected conspecifics. Animals will remain in quarantine until cleared through serology. The cages are changed LAST. Once personnel have handled quarantined mice they should not have contact with any other animals in the facility.
4. The cage should be moved to a separate room or cubicle apart from unaffected animals. In some circumstances, a ventilated rack cage may serve as an adequate barrier for isolation purposes. Mice must be housed in autoclave safe cages fitted with micro-isolator filter bonnets or disposable micro-isolator cages. Bonnets or disposable lids must have intact, properly fitted filters.
5. Immunocompromised animals that are in isolation within the general animal room will have their cages placed on the lowest level of the cage racks and will be changed last.
6. Before entering the cubicle or room personal protective equipment (PPE) must be put on. PPE includes: shoe covers, isolation gown, gloves, mask and hair bonnet. PPE will be disposed as biohazardous trash. A biohazard container will be located inside the cubicle or room. This container is lined with an autoclave bag. The trash is autoclaved before disposal at least weekly. PPE must be packaged in an autoclavable biohazard bag before removal from the infected area (cubicle or room).
7. All animal caging and water bottles must be removed from the cubicle in sealed biohazard bags. Do not dump the bedding or the water. Disposable caging is autoclaved intact with the water bottle. Non-disposable cages are dumped in the red-side dump station into an autoclave bag. The bedding is autoclaved before disposal. Glass water bottles and cages are sterilized using chlorine dioxide for a minimum of 30 minutes prior to running through the regular cage wash cycle.
8. Access to these animals is RESTRICTED. Only personnel performing animal husbandry may enter this cubicle. Animal experimental procedures and breeding is discouraged until the serological status of the animals has been verified. Exceptions to this must be approved by FLSC management. Diagnostic procedures, treatments, and length of isolation will be at the discretion of the Attending Veterinarian.