

**Standardized Care for Weanling
Mice (Rodents)
IACUC Guideline
Effective Date: September 29, 2020**

Purpose:

To standardize procedures for weaning mice in order to minimize adverse events associated with housing newly weaned animals.

IACUC Policy on Weaning

- Litters must be weaned by **P21** and separated into same sex cages.
- For the occasional finding of small sized pups that may not be successfully weaned at P21, the cage must be labeled with the new expected weaning date and other litters **may not** be born into the same cage. **(Figure 1)**
- Extended weaning (P22-P28) may be requested in the IACUC protocol under 'Reportable Exceptions' for strains that consistently require delayed weaning.
- A weanling is defined as any mouse under 31 days of age that has been weaned regardless of wean date.

Weanling Care

- Avoid weaning small weanlings on Fridays or before holidays unless a lab member will be present on the weekend or holiday to observe the animals.
- For cages with automatic water, the valve must be primed before placing the cage in the rack so that a drop of water is present on the valve. This will encourage the animals to learn to use the Lixit. **(Figure 2)**
- Each newly weaned cage is recommended to have new food placed in the feed hopper and 1-3 moistened food pellets on the floor of the cage. For Moistened pellet preparation, see "Debilitated Weanlings" below, 4th bullet.

Debilitated Weanlings

- Weanlings that are small or may need extra care should be monitored daily by lab members.
- Regardless of water type, all debilitated weanlings should be provided with one half of a gel pack placed on the floor of each cage. **(Figure 3)**
 - The gel packs should be changed out by the lab as often as needed, generally 2 to 3 times during the first week of weaning. LARC will replace gel packs at cage change if needed.
- Each newly weaned cage should have new food placed in the feed hopper and 1-3 moistened food pellets should be placed on the floor of the cage.
 - Moistened pellets preparation: Add dry pellets to a dish or small paper cup and add a quarter of an inch of clean water to cover pellets. Allow pellets to soak for 3-5 minutes until water is absorbed. Add moistened pellets to cage floor. **(Figure 4)**
 - Do not add dry pellets to cage floor and pour water on them. The water will get absorbed by the bedding instead of the feed.
- If animals appear dehydrated and weak, LARC veterinary staff should be contacted.

Standardized Care for Weanling Mice

Figure 1: New Litter Cards: Note location where expected date of wean can be entered by lab.

NEW LITTER	
DOB:	1/1
DAY 12:	1/12
DOW:	1/21
EXPECTED DOW:	1/25

Figure 2: Priming Lixit for Weanling Cages: Lixits should be primed at the time of weaning. For debilitated weanlings, prime lixit more frequently. (Note: If a Lixit drips continuously, immediately remove cage from the Lixit to prevent flooding, and notify LARC.)



Figure 3: Newly Prepared Cage for Debilitated Weanlings: Note clean cage with moistened feed, nestlet and ½ gel pack.



Figure 4: Moistened Feed Pellet Preparation: Use clean water and leave pellets to soak for 3-5 minutes

