

**Standardized Care for Weanling
Mice (RODENTS)
IACUC Guideline
Effective Date: August 2016**



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)**

Debilitated Weanlings

- Weanlings that are small or may need extra care must 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 lab is responsible for changing out the gel pack twice in the first week and then weekly as needed. LARC will replace gel packs at cage change.
- 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.
- Diet supplements for debilitated weanlings may include dough diet and soft diet gels. (**Figure 5**)
 - These can be obtained by LARC through recharge and ordering information can be provided by contacting LARCsupplyrequest@ucsf.edu.
 - Any special diets for debilitated weanlings must be approved and documented by LARC.
- If animals appear dehydrated and weak, LARC veterinary staff should be contacted.

Questions or comments: Please contact the IACUC office at 415-476-2197.

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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: 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



Figure 5: Example of Weanling Supplements: Dough and Diet Gels for debilitated weanlings

