



Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Bedding Changes for Rodents in the Immediate Post-Partum Period Policy

I. Purpose

If rodents are disturbed in the immediate peri-partum (pre- & post-partum) period, some dams may ignore, injure, or cannibalize their pups due to the physical disruption of being moved to a new cage. This policy is intended to prevent such behavior.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all research experiments and programs at Einstein.

III. Policy

Although necessary to maintain a sanitary environment, movement to a new cage includes the removal of familiar olfactory cues from the environment. Because bedding is changed on a weekly basis, and large numbers of cages are changed each day, it is not possible for Institute for Animal Studies (IAS) staff to routinely avoid changing the bedding of all rodent dams which have recently delivered pups. However, if the Principal Investigator (PI) and/or PI staff identify and tag cages which contain newly born pups, IAS staff will omit changing the cage bottoms in these cages for the first week postpartum. To avoid having the cage bottom changed, cages must be clearly identified with a pink, IAS-issued “Do Not Change” cage card. The “Do Not Change” card is available from the facility supervisor. As noted on the card, the PI/staff must record when the card is initially placed, each time the cage is checked, and when the bedding is changed. If a cage has not been changed by IAS staff due to this type of notification, it becomes the responsibility of the PI and his/her staff to see that bedding is changed soon enough that unsanitary conditions or high levels of intra-cage ammonia do not accumulate. If cages are found in an unsanitary condition at any time, even if they are marked with a “Do Not Change”, IAS staff may move the rodents to a clean cage bottom. The PI must remove the “Do Not Change” card promptly when the 7-day post-partum period has expired. Extension of this period beyond 7 days requires submission of an amendment to the IACUC for an exemption to standard husbandry.

IV. Definitions

None.

V. Effective Date

Effective as of: 19 February 2018.

VI. Policy Management and Responsibilities

Einstein's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is the Responsible Office under this Policy. The Institutional Official for the IACUC is the Responsible Executive for this policy. The IACUC Chairperson is the Responsible Officer for the management of this policy.

VII. Approved (or Revised)



Institutional Official



Date

Revision dates: 12/15/98, 4/20/2005, 6/15/2011, 7/16/2013, 2/22/2017, 2/19/18