



Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Overcrowded Cages Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide limitations on the number of mice or rats that may be housed in a cage.

II. Scope

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

III. Policy

Based on guidelines given in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, cages used in animal housing areas at Albert Einstein College of Medicine may hold combinations of animals as described in the following sections.

A. MICE

Mouse cages have 70 in² of floor space and may hold either of the following combinations:

- Five (5) or fewer adult mice of less than 25 grams per mouse
- Four (4) or fewer adult mice weighing between 25-35 grams per mouse
- Three (3) or fewer adult mice weighing between 35-45 grams.
- Two (2) adult mice over 45 grams.
- Two adult mice plus one litter of pups

IF HAREM BREEDING IS USED, PREGNANT FEMALES MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE CAGE so that the cage never contains more than one litter of pups concurrently. The pregnant female may be moved with the breeder male, if post-partum estrus breeding is planned. If TWO females are allowed to whelp simultaneously in the same cage, one dam and her litter must be removed (cage separated) immediately. If it is difficult to determine which litter belongs to each dam, the two dams may be separated, and the litters may be randomly split between the two dams in separate cages.

N.B.: If the male is separated from the pregnant female prior to parturition, the investigator will lose the possibility of breeding at the immediate post-partum estrus and it is likely that the total yield of pups will be diminished (over time).

Exceptions to this rule may be permitted only by specific approval by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Exceptions may be granted when mice have consistently poor conception rates or have consistently small litters (less than 4 pups). Exceptions may also be granted when one normal female is allowed to whelp in a cage with a mutant female who is unable to care for her litter (e.g., the mutant female lacks mammary glands). In this case the litter of the normal female is removed, and she will act as a foster mother to mutant pups.

B. RATS

Rat cages (190 in²) can hold 4 adults up to 400 grams or one adult pair plus a litter. These cages should not be used for harem breeding unless dams are separated once they are determined to be pregnant.

Breeding cage (252 in²) should ideally be used for breeding rats (2 adults and a litter). A cage can accommodate only one litter at a time. More than one female and her litter in a cage is not permitted. If harem-style breeding is employed, pregnant females must be removed when they are noticed to be pregnant.

Litters must be weaned promptly at 21 days, unless pups are immature.

Square cages (72 in²) are to be used for single housing rats (only).

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: 1/99, 4/20/2005, 6/15/2011, 7/16/2013, 2/22/2017, 2/19/18