



BEST PRACTICES FOR ENSURING QUALITY CARE OF RESEARCH ANIMALS

Perform only those procedures described in the protocol.

- Ensure that everyone on the protocol is familiar with all its procedures, and that they understand protocols must be followed to the letter.
- There can be no deviation from a protocol without prior approval from the IACUC.

Document any observations, analgesics, or therapeutic administrations.

- Be thorough and complete about documenting in the medical record and/or surgery cage card.
- Remember – if it's not written down, it didn't happen.

Communicate with veterinary staff regarding the health status of post-procedural animals.

- If an animal develops any complications after procedures, you should communicate with the veterinary staff and document this in the medical record.

Observe post-procedure animals according to the schedule outlined in the approved protocol.

- Follow the protocol exactly as written.
- If monitoring frequency seems too stringent, e.g. requires night time observations, request a modification of the protocol from the IACUC to allow more flexibility.
- Pay close attention to any weight loss and if an animal's weight loss reaches the maximum allowed in your protocol, either euthanize the animal or notify the veterinarian.

Allow only animal handlers listed on the protocol to perform procedures on animals.

- Assure that all staff are added to the protocol and have been thoroughly trained to perform all procedures requested of them.

Follow aseptic technique for all survival surgeries.

- Follow IACUC policies for rodent and large animal surgeries.
- Use sterile instruments and supplies and good aseptic technique.
- All staff performing surgeries should be deemed competent in anesthesia and surgical procedures before beginning experiments.

Ensure all administered substances are usable.

- Institute a program to monitor all substances on a monthly basis.
- Label any item that is not for animal use "for in vitro use only".
- Label any item that is expired and will be used in acute procedures "for acute use only".
- Expired anesthetics and analgesics must NEVER be used.

Label syringes.

- Always label syringes with contents to be used on live animals and dispose of properly after use.

Store controlled substances in secured locations.

- Always lock up all controlled substances.
- Record usage on appropriate log sheet.