

**Arizona State University  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee  
STANDARD INSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINE**

**FOOD OR WATER RESTRICTION OF RODENTS**

These guidelines outline procedures to be followed when rodents are to be food or water restricted for greater than 24 hours.

1. All food and/or water restrictions must be pre-approved as part of an IACUC protocol. Protocol information must include the “target weight” (i.e., percentage of ad lib weight that the investigators are striving for) as well as the “minimum weight” (i.e., the absolute minimum percent ad lib weight the animal will be allowed to reach when taking into account unavoidable fluctuation around the target weight). For adult animals, target and minimal weights can be a percentage of the “initial weight” (i.e., the weight of the animal immediately prior to the restriction being implemented). However, for young animals, the target and minimal weights must take into account expected growth of the animal. This is best done by using ad lib fed control animals, but may also be achieved using a growth chart established for the species/strain and/or evaluating the body condition score (BCS). The protocol must also describe animal monitoring (e.g., daily weighing) and actions to be taken should an animal fall below its minimum weight.
2. When animals are to be started on a food or water restriction, a restriction cage card must be placed on each cage. Restriction cards must include animal identification, type of restriction (food/water), start date of restriction, and anticipated end date of restriction. Alternatively, a food or water restriction card can be placed on each cage, and the additional information (responsible individuals, start date, end date) can be located on a page posted in the room or on the door of the animal housing room provided it is clearly apparent as to which animals the posted document applies.
3. Any animal that is on food or water restriction must be weighed at a frequency that meets the minimum requirement set forth in the applicable active IACUC protocol.
4. Weight records (with the target and minimum weight listed on the record) must be accessible by the DACT veterinarians and vivarium supervisor. This can be achieved by keeping hard copies of the records within the animal room or providing relevant DACT personnel access to electronic files.
5. If an animal falls below its minimum weight, the procedures outlined in the applicable IACUC protocol must be instituted by the lab personnel. In addition, any animal that falls below the minimum weight should be reported to the DACT veterinary staff for evaluation.
6. As part of their daily health check, DACT husbandry staff must thoroughly observe each animal in cages identified with a food and/or water restriction card. As is standard, any animal showing signs of malnourishment, dehydration, reduced activity, or other potential problems must be reported to the veterinary team. The veterinary team will work with the primary contact as well as the PI when addressing these cases.
7. Deviations from these procedures are only allowable when approved in an IACUC protocol or with prior approval from the Attending Veterinarian and the IACUC Chair.

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