

Miscellaneous

Item 5 – Housing Density of Breeding Mice

The [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Eighth Edition](#) sets space recommendations on a per animal basis, yet also recognizes that special situations may arise which necessitate exceeding that capacity. Breeding is one such situation. According to the specific per-animal recommendations of the Guide, a normal adult breeding pair (>25 g. each) would exceed the capacity of our normal shoebox caging with any litter in excess of seven animals. Obviously, this is an unrealistic restriction given the propensity of mice to have as many as 14 offspring per litter. Although the Guide does allow for exceeding this recommendation, it is only allowed with specific approval by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC); therefore, this policy is being implemented to provide guidelines to investigators and ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

Policy on Housing of Breeding Mice at SUNY Upstate Medical University

1. Continuous, monogamous pairing is the preferred method for breeding mice.
2. Pups must be weaned at 21 days of age or as soon as a new litter is born, unless special circumstances exist (special arrangements made with the Department of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR) on a case-by-case basis).
3. Harem breeding (2-3 females/male) is allowed, but with the following restrictions:
 - a. Harem breeding should be limited to those situations where intensive breeding is required and there is a limited supply of male animals.
 - b. Females that are obviously pregnant must be moved to a separate cage prior to giving birth. The last female in the cage may remain with the male to take advantage of post-partum estrus.
 - c. DLAR will separate out pregnant females as they are identified.
 - d. The principal investigator will be responsible for recombining animals (if desired) once the litter(s) has been weaned (unless special arrangements have been made for DLAR to do this).

Exceptions to the above policies are allowed, but require specific approval by the IACUC and documentation within the protocol. Exceptions will only be considered for animal health or science-related reasons. Cost and/or limited housing space cannot be used as a justification. Questions concerning this policy should be directed to DLAR (4-6563).

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