



TITLE: Common Rodent Health Problems and Treatments

SOP Category: Veterinary

RUAC SOP #: 7.02

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Approval:

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SCOPE: This SOP applies to all Animal Care Staff (ACS), ACS Supervisors (ACSS), Veterinary Staff (VS), and Research Staff members (RS) at all Rutgers facilities.

OBJECTIVE: To provide a list of common rodent health issues and potential treatments.

DEFINITIONS:

BAR – Bright, Alert and Responsive

BCS - Body Condition Score

EAE - Experimental Autoimmune Encephalomyelitis

EUTH - Humanely euthanize

IP- Intraperitoneal

Nutritional support – Diet gel(s), wet food on cage floor

SC - Subcutaneous

TNT – Toenail trim

TX - Treatment

TAO - Triple Antibiotic Ointment

PROCEDURES:

For some conditions, treatment options vary. The treatment plan followed will be dependent on the evaluation and discretion of the clinical veterinarian. In situations in which animal welfare is compromised, for severe clinical presentations or poor prognosis, animals will be humanely euthanized.

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Animal condition	Treatment (TX)
Abdominal distention	Palpate to rule out pregnancy/dystocia, cecal torsion, EUTH
Appendage injury (e.g., foot/tail entrapment)	Open wounds: topical skin disinfectant (e.g., 0.2 % chlorhexidine) Swelling/not fractured: Monitor, analgesia (NSAID) Fractured/Dislocation/Bone exposure/Degloving: EUTH
Balanoposthitis or Paraphimosis	Mild to moderate: TAO or lidocaine gel topically daily, check ability to urinate, house on soft bedding material
Barbering	Watch, may add secondary enrichment
BCS=2	Supportive care
BCS<2, and/or weight loss>20%	EUTH
Bladder Dysfunction (non-research related)	EUTH
Bladder Dysfunction (research related)	Easy access to food/water, empty bladder
Conjunctivitis, Blepharitis,	TNT if pruritis; Ophthalmic antibiotic ointment
Corneal ulcer	Ophthalmic antibiotic ointment, analgesia, EUTH
Dehydration	Fluid support (hydrogel or warm saline/LRS SC/IP, up to 10 ml/kg), nutritional support
Dyspnea, labored breathing	EUTH
Dystocia, animal BAR	10% calcium gluconate diluted in sterile NaCl, Oxytocin, fluids (saline or dextrose), analgesia (meloxicam/carprofen) SC as appropriate. If applicable, gently extract stuck pup; Heat and nutritional support, if needed
Dystocia, animal hunched	EUTH

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Animal condition	Treatment (TX)
EAE	Fluid and nutritional support
Ear issues (ripped tags, irritation, scabbing, discharge)	Topical disinfectant (e.g., 0.2% chlorhexidine), removal of ear tags. Add TNT if dermatitis present
Fighting wounds, mild to moderate	Separate aggressor; 0.2% Chlorhexidine Solution, TAO, or Vetericyn spray topically up to daily
Fighting wounds, severe (necrosis, abscess, exposed muscle, or bone)	Separate aggressor, EUTH
Flooded cage	Replace cage, dry off, heat support, +/-warm SC fluids
Head Tilt	EUTH
Hunched, ruffled coat, inactive, lethargic	Fluid and nutritional support, EUTH
Hydrocephalus	EUTH
Microphthalmia, Anophthalmia	Treatment not required
Overgrown incisors/ Malocclusion	Trim; check teeth weekly; trim as needed; fluids SC and/or nutritional support if needed; recommend EUTH and do not breed
Paralysis (research related) Example: DMD (demyelinating diseases)	Easy access to food/water on cage floor, bladder expression, check for urine scalding, soft bedding material
Paralysis (not research related)	EUTH
Preputial gland abscess	0.2% Chlorhexidine Solution topically or TAO daily, EUTH

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Animal Condition	Treatment
Rectal prolapse < 5mm	Apply TAO or Preparation H up to daily
Rectal prolapse > 5mm or ulcerative, bleeding, necrotic	EUTH
Ruptured globe (eye)	EUTH
Seizures (not research related)	EUTH
Seizures (research related)	Monitor, decrease manipulations
Tumor, ulcerated, necrotic	EUTH unless approved in IACUC protocol *Refer to tumor policy
Tumor, non-ulcerated	Monitor 1-2 cm. EUTH at >2 cm for mice. EUTH at >4cm for rats. Size criteria for single tumor or size of multiple tumors combined. *Add tumor tracking card to cage, if not present
Ulcerative dermatitis, mild-moderate	TNT weekly plus application of Dakins, 0.2% Chlorhexidine Solution, Vetericyn spray or TAO topically, as appropriate; EUTH
Ulcerative dermatitis, severe (abscessed, fibrosis, exposed muscle or bone)	EUTH
Weanlings, small/underweight	Fluid and nutritional support, monitor

REFERENCE:**SOP 7.01 Animal Health Monitoring**