

LAR Veterinary Care of Rodents

The CSU Animal Care and Use Program has 3 board certified laboratory animal veterinarians, 4-5 veterinary residents, and 3 veterinary technicians who provide clinical care and research support to investigators at CSU. The Attending Veterinarian is also the Director of Laboratory Animal Resources (LAR) and manages the vivaria housing animals used in research and teaching. Rodents are usually acquired from commercial vendors that are known to be free of indigenous pathogens and health reports are monitored as needed. Rodents acquired from non-commercial vendors undergo a quarantine and testing period prior to being allowed into the regular vivarium. Upon arrival, an initial assessment of health is done by animal care staff and the animals are allowed to acclimate for 2-3 days. LAR animal care staff perform daily animal welfare checks, and the colonies are monitored regularly via the sentinel health program.

Each animal is observed daily for well-being, feed, water and housing conditions and observations are documented on room check sheets. When an animal is noted to have an abnormal health condition, the technical or veterinary staff is notified-via the medical record system if non-urgent, or via the on-call veterinary phone number if urgent. A veterinary technician or veterinarian will examine the animal within 24 hours for non-urgent cases, or immediately if the condition is urgent. A diagnosis is determined, and the investigator is consulted to approve recommended treatments or euthanasia. If research staff cannot be reached, the veterinary staff have full discretion to appropriately treat pain/distress. The Attending Veterinarian makes the final decision on whether an animal should be temporarily or permanently removed from a study for humane reasons.

The main health monitoring program for rodents utilizes sentinel free PCR testing methods which include IVC exhaust air duct monitoring and sentinel free dirty bedding monitoring in caging systems where exhaust air duct monitoring is not possible. Health monitoring is generally not performed for short term studies less than 6 weeks.

A veterinarian is on call during holidays, after hours, and weekends to provide emergency medical care. The number to call for emergencies is posted throughout the animal facility.