

**The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER**

**POLICY STATEMENT**

**Food and/or Fluid Restriction**

Food and/or Fluid restriction procedures are occasionally utilized in research settings to provide incentive for an animal to behave in a particular manner. In all situations, at least minimal quantities of food and fluids should be available to provide for the development of young animals and to maintain long-term well-being of all animals.

In the case of conditioned-response research protocols, use of highly preferred food or fluid as positive reinforcement, instead of restriction, is highly recommended.

NPO procedures for pre-surgical fasting are not included in this consideration. NPO procedures shall not extend for greater than the recommended time for the species; if surgical delays are encountered, the animals should be fed and re-fasted prior to the next scheduled procedure.

Restriction for research purposes must be scientifically justified. Additionally, methods of assessing the program and frequent objective means of monitoring animal health must be a component of the program. Methods of assessing animal health may include: body weight, hematocrit/hematology/serum chemistry, urinalysis, fecal production, and behavioral observations. Criteria should be considered for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from a food or fluid restriction protocol.

General components of the program may include:

1. Prior to beginning initial training animals should be examined for general overall condition.
2. Prior to the first day of restriction, the animal should be weighed. This weight will serve as the baseline for that particular animal for that upcoming trial.
3. During restriction, each animal should be weighed at least weekly and more often for animals requiring greater restriction (as defined in the approved protocol). NHPs should be weighed daily during periods of fluid restriction. A daily record of the weight and the amount of water consumed should be maintained in the animal housing area.
4. During restriction, fluids should be provided daily in order to maintain a weight of 90% of the animal's baseline weight. For juvenile animals consideration must be made for a normal growth curve. (Consultation with the veterinary staff to

establish a “recommended minimum” should occur as the minimum necessary will vary per species/diet specifications. Recommended minimum is to be noted in the approved Animal Activity Protocol.)

5. Individual animals may have quite unique fluid/food requirements. Frequent and routine animal assessments must be utilized to determine the specific food/fluid animal needs.

The UMMC Animal Activity Protocol form question #16 prompts the investigator to note if Food and/or Fluid Restriction is a component of the protocol. Further, the investigator must complete Appendix I and explain and justify the need for the restriction procedures and provide specific criteria for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from a protocol.

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