

## IACUC POLICY ON FOOD AND WATER RESTRICTION

*The following policy defines the Howard University's IACUC's guidelines for withholding food and water from animals for study purposes, and special feeding exceptions. Contact the IACUC Coordinator, Chair, or Veterinarian if unsure of classification. Specific details regarding food/water restrictions and feeding exceptions will be thoroughly described in the approved protocol.*

Food restriction other than short-term fasting standard for some species due to undergo operative procedures is prohibited unless justified and approved by the IACUC. Water restriction is particularly discouraged and must also be justified. Food and/or water restriction as well as the period of restriction must be shown to be scientifically required in order to accomplish study objectives.

Investigators may be required to monitor the following individual animal variables based on the nature and period of the restriction:

Body weight checks: Once or twice weekly weight checks based on degree of restriction  
Evaluation for intervention: 7 - 10% rapid loss over a period of days; slower % weight loss over a longer period. Euthanasia is recommended with greater than 20% loss particularly if combined with other signs indicating a poor prognosis.

Blood Urea Nitrogen (BUN) Analysis: Reduction of normal species value: May be assessed in instances of severe restriction or as normal routine health check event for animal

Urine/fecal Output Evaluation or Assessment: Decreased; also lower than normal fecal moisture if ascertainable

Food/Fluid Consumption: If lower than expected consumption

Other: Species-specific behavior changes, hydration assessment, etc.

### **Food/Water Restrictions**

- **Short term restriction:**

Food and/or water may be withheld for up to 24 hours. Scientific justification must be provided in the protocol. Final approval is subject to IACUC discretion. If water is being withheld, animals must be regularly monitored during the fasting period. Period of monitoring for water restriction (i.e. every 2 hours, every 4 hours) must be specifically stated in the protocol. Animals exhibiting signs of dehydration (inelasticity of skin, rough hair coat, sinking of eyes into the orbit) will be provided water immediately.

- **Long term restriction:**

Studies requiring long term food and/or water restrictions (controlled access to feed and water) are subject to IACUC approval and require consistent monitoring (i.e. twice daily, daily- specifically described in the protocol) by research staff. Scientific justification must be provided in the protocol, including description of a program to monitor physiologic or behavioral changes, documentation of body weights, and percentage change in individual animal body weights.

### **Feeding Exceptions**

- Feeding animals from the cage floor is acceptable under the following conditions and should be described in the IACUC protocol if anticipated prior to study start:
  - If animals are recently weaned (< 5 days) or cannot properly reach the feeder.
  - During pregnancy or prior to weaning of litter.
    - If necessary due to animals' reduced mobility (recovering from surgery, cranial implants or devices that restrict access)
- Animals can be fed from the cage floor without IACUC approval if recommended by the facility veterinarian.
- All cages, where animals are being fed from the cage floor, must be properly identified with notation on the cage card.

Reviewed and Revised 11/17/2017