DAR Rodent Weaning Policy
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This policy describes the procedures for housing weanling rodents and applies to all researchers who maintain breeding colonies at Emory. The purpose of the policy is to minimize adverse events associated with housing newly weaned animals.

The process for establishing weanling rodents in new cages is as follows:

1. Lab personnel should set up cages with supplies prior to placing the animals in the cage.
2. All weanling animals should receive a water bottle and portion cup with moist rodent chow. The portion cup should be made by adding water from a water bottle to the food. Preferably, powdered food should be used instead of pellets.
3. DAR animal care or veterinary staff can recommend hydration gels or extra food on the bottom of the cage if animals are expected to take longer than normal to transition to their new housing conditions.
4. Weaned cages should be designated with a laminated “Newly Weaned” card behind the regular cage card. The date of birth must be written on the regular cage card.
5. If animals are place on an automatic water rack, the valve should be primed before placing the cage. A drop of water on the valve will help the animals learn to use the lixit.
6. Lab personnel should complete a visual inspection of all animals housed that day when the task is complete. This check should include the observations for food, a water bottle, moist chow in a portion cup and the “Newly Weaned” card on the cage.
7. The moist chow portion cup must be checked by the lab personnel at 1-2 days after weaning. At this time, the portion cup should be changed and checked again 1-2 days later. After the second check, the portion cup can be removed if the animals appear healthy. The water bottle should remain in the cage.
8. DAR staff will remove the “Newly Weaned” card once animals are reliably eating from the hopper and drinking from the long-term water source (lixit or water bottle). If animals are housed on an automatic watering rack, animal care will remove the water bottle and place a new to automatic water sign on the cage.
9. Animals not weaned by 25 days will be considered overcrowded. The overcrowded notice placed on the cage will be associated with a fee. Labs are responsible for weaning animals even if an overcrowded notice has been placed. Chronic offenders of this policy may be subject to additional charges.
10. We recommend that animals are weaned as early in the week as possible. This practice will reduce the need for lab personnel to change moist chow on the weekends.