

Handling a Mouse



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Equipment list: Handling a mouse

Equipment for this station:

- Model rodent



Considerations for this station:

- Mouse handling video available on the AHWLA website. Click on 'Tutorials' and then 'Practical Animal Handling' or scan QR code above.
- There is a useful supporting document found on blackboard; Animal Management 2 → Practicals → Exotics → Exotics Practical Handling Booklet

Please inform a member of staff if equipment is damaged or about to run out.



Clinical Skills: Handling a Mouse



1
Mice are active, social animals which can be difficult to handle and more prone to bite than other rodents, so care must be taken when handling them. As prey animals, mice have quick reflexes and are easily frightened so care must be taken on approach to reduce stress and keep noises and movements to a minimum.



2
The best method to catch unhandled mice is to pick up the mouse by the base of its tail using your thumb and forefinger. Then support the body with your other hand or sleeve.



Once restrained by the tail the mouse can then be scruffed. Allow the mouse to grip onto a surface like your sleeve or the top of its cage while still restraining it by its tail. Then with your other hand use your thumb and forefinger to scruff the mouse by the neck close behind the ears. Make sure you have enough scruff or the mouse will be able to turn enough to bite you.



4
Well handled mice prefer to be handled by scooping the mouse from its cage with both hands. Disadvantages to this method are the increased risk of the mouse escaping and being dropped and the freedom to inflict a bite should the mouse become scared or nervous.

5
The methods of restraint shown above are useful for giving injections.

Injection sites:

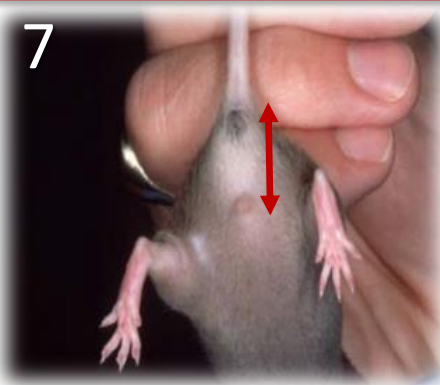
- Subcutaneous - scruff of neck
- Intramuscular - avoid as very little muscle mass
- Intravenous - too small to do practically
- Intraperitoneal - right caudal quadrant of abdomen



6
Practise the technique described on the model rodent.



Clinical Skills: Sexing a Mouse



Male

The same technique for sexing rats can be applied to the mouse, tail lifting over your forearm being the most effective way.

A male animal will have a long anogenital distance.



Female

This is a female mouse. Note the decreased anal-genital distance compared with the male and the presence of nipples.



- Male : Buck
- Female : Doe
- Young : Cubs
- Oestrus : Spontaneous cycle every 4 - 5 days and lasts for 10 - 20 hours. Recurrence of oestrus post partum (approx 24 hours after parturition) then end of lactation. Polyoestrus;spontaneous ovulators.
- Gestation : 19 - 21 days
- Birth weight : 2g
- Size of litter : 5 – 12 on average
- Stage of development at birth : Young are born blind and hairless
- Eyes open : 8 days
- Weaning age : 21 days
- Breeding Age : 6 – 7 weeks
- Adult weight : 20 – 40g
- Breeding life of female : 12 – 18 months
- Breeding life of male : 12 – 18 months
- Life expectancy : 1– 2.5 years on average
- Rectal temperature: 37.5 °C
- Heart rate: 500 - 725 beats per min
- Respiratory rate: 84 - 230 breaths per min