

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Subject:	Use of Sterilized or Irradiated Rodent Feed
Source:	Office of Laboratory Animal Resources
Effective Date:	2/10/2025
Replaces:	11/09/2020
Applies to:	Personnel involved in research or teaching studies involving animals Animal Welfare Act; PHS Policy on Humane Care & Use of Laboratory Animals; Guide for the Care & Use of Laboratory Animals
Reference:	

Introduction

Aside from introducing live animals into a colony and indirect contact between animal populations through unrestricted personnel traffic, contamination of the diet with rodent pathogens, in particular Mouse Parvovirus, has been shown to be a risk for introduction of unwanted microorganisms. Rodent diets are made from grain-based commodities and may harbor a pathogen that when consumed it may result in the transmission of pathogens to animals. Because the Office of Laboratory Animal Resources (OLAR) at the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campus (CU Denver | Anschutz) has been mandated to maintain a Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) program due to the devastating impact of adventitious infections on research programs, the institution requires that all rodent feed be irradiated or sterilizable in order to gain entry into any SPF animal facility or housing area.

Policy Statement

All rodent feed must be irradiated prior to entry into a SPF animal facility or be labeled sterilizable to be autoclaved within the facility prior to being fed to any rodent in a SPF animal facility at CU Denver | Anschutz. OLAR does not have irradiator capabilities; it must be done through the diet manufacturer.

Procedure

- OLAR only orders irradiated feed for mice and rats.
- Special Diets that have been in a contaminated area are not permitted in a SPF animal facility.
- Principal Investigators that would like to use Special Diets, must work with their supplier to have the diet irradiated or supplied in a sterilizable form.
- All feed, including Special Diets, will be delivered to the dock of the animal facility.
- The outer container will be disposed of or decontaminated upon arrival.
- Feed will be placed in a new container. It may be aliquoted depending on the quantity that has been delivered.
- Large quantities of Special Diet:
 - Delivery is coordinated with OLAR for proper processing upon arrival.
 - Feed not in use will be kept in the investigators' research space and stored appropriately as defined by the manufacturer and the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals.
- Diet Storage and Management:
 - Room temperature and refrigerated diet stored and managed by OLAR: Laboratories must request the delivery of diet from OLAR staff at least 2 business days prior to the date the Special Diet is needed in the animal room.
 - Refrigerated diets stored in the vivarium and managed by research labs: Small/Dorm refrigerators for storage of diet at the suite level must be approved by OLAR and supplied by the investigative staff. Principal Investigators are permitted to share diet storage and are responsible for refrigerator maintenance and monthly cleaning (inside and out).
 - Frozen diets stored outside the vivarium and managed by research labs: These diets will be received at the vivarium dock, sanitarily aliquoted, and labeled with lot and expiration. Aliquots are brought to the vivarium by lab staff, the bag wiped down at the

- gowning station with disinfectant and taken directly to the housing room.
- Diet that has been in the housing room is not permitted to go back to cold storage managed by OLAR or return to Research Labs.
 - The additional cost of providing irradiated Special Diets will be covered by the Principal Investigator.

Per regulatory requirements, failure to comply with this policy may result in a notification from your funding agency (e.g. NIH) and regulatory agencies (e.g. USDA) that your research has violated federal and/or local policies regarding the humane use of animals. This notification may affect continuous funding of your animal-related research. Further, depending on the violation, you may be required to take additional training and/or your privilege to conduct animal research at CU Denver | Anschutz might be temporarily suspended or even completely revoked.