Cage Changes for Pregnant Mice

Standard Operating Procedure BYU

170710SC

Introduction

Pregnant rodents are very sensitive to stress and will abort pregnancies to protect themselves and their pups.

Examples of stressors include but are not limited to:

* Vibrations
* Cage/rack motion
* Noises (especially loud or agitating)
* Pathogens and illness
* Rough handling, such as moving by the tail
* Perfume, cologne, and other strong scents
* The smells of other animals

To help decrease the stress on pregnant mothers, their cages are changed at select time intervals. If a cage is observed as dirty during this time, the mother should be given a new, clean cage with ample amounts of bedding and breeder enrichment. Two or three days before a mother’s due date (tracked on the breeding cage card) the investigator should change her cage.

Cage Changing Procedure

1. Enter the vivarium as described in 'Entering the Vivarium' SOP. Proceed to the animal room.
2. Thoroughly clean the changing station with Oxivir and don new gloves. **Make sure gloves are wet with Oxivir at all times.**
3. Place the mother’s current cage and her new cage on the changing station, side by side.
4. Open both cages and place the lids to the side. Make sure not to block the metal grate on the edge of the changing station, as this will interrupt the hygienic airflow.
5. Dump the breeder chow from the old feed hopper to the new one.
   1. If the feed is not up to the fill line, add more chow from the breeding bins. These are found on the racks with a cage card that says “8626 Breeder Chow”. Make sure that gloves are wet with Oxivir when handling feed and containers.
6. Carefully take the mother’s nest and some of her old bedding and put it in an identical position in the new cage.
7. Pick up the mother, either with the cupping method or the tunnel method (posted in the front entry way of the vivarium and covered in animal handling SOPs) and put her gently in the new cage. Do not drop or dump her; let her walk off the hand or out of the tunnel. **Do not pick up the mouse by the tail. This causes distress that may result in the abortion of the pregnancy.**
8. Double check the bedding and nesting material in the dirty cage to ensure that no mice were accidentally left behind.
9. Place the cage card on the new cage.
10. Replace the mother into her original spot on the rack. Remember to test the water valve before putting the cage in its slot. Be very careful not to rattle her cage around while putting her back.
11. Put the lid back on the dirty cage and bring it out to the dirty cage rack in the hallway.

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