Purpose:
Currently, the Office of the Campus Veterinarian (OCV) is mandated to examine and direct the
treatment for any and every medical condition in animals at WSU other than care covered by an individual
medical SOP, ASAF or under IACUC policy #3 (Guidelines for Veterinary Care of Animals by Veterinary
Rodents do suffer occasional minor injuries and illnesses which could be assessed and treated by
faculty, students, research staff and animal care technicians. This SOP authorizes and provides direction for
the initial evaluation and treatment of rodents with specific minor medical conditions by faculty, students,
research staff and animal care technicians.

Policy:
Faculty, students, research staff and animal care technicians may assess medical conditions and
provide the treatments for rodents with the following specific minor medical conditions (conjunctivitis,
balanoposthitis or paraphimosis (inflammation of the penis or prepuce), rectal prolapse, bite wounds,
ulcerative dermatitis, malocclusion and unthrift).
OCV remains responsible for veterinary medical care at WSU and must still be notified about ill or
injured animals as directed in the Notification Protocol for Abnormal Behavior in Research or Teaching
Animals (http://campusvet.wsu.edu/contact/documents/OCVNotificationprocessFINAL.pdf).
OCV will continue to provide veterinary medical care when there are no other appropriate
personnel available to provide care. They will also examine ill and injured animals as needed and inspect
medical records of animals receiving medical care from non-OCV personnel. Animals with severe injuries,
animals with medical conditions not covered in this SOP should be evaluated by the OCV veterinary staff.
All assessments and treatments should be recorded in a medical record.

Procedures:
When an animal is noted as having a medical issue, the person noting the animal’s condition must do
the following:
• **Notification:** The principle investigator (or his/her designee) and the OCV are to be informed when an animal is noted as being abnormal. Medical treatment can interfere with research outcomes in some cases so contact should be made *prior* to initiating treatment.

• **Flagging of Cage:** The cage should be flagged to indicate that there is an animal receiving medical treatment. The OCV Veterinary Staff will flag the cage with a blue Veterinary Care card when they examine the animal.

• **Documenting:** The individual or group medical record should have an entry documenting the abnormality/examination of the findings and the prescribed treatment plan. All treatments must be documented in the medical record with the date and initials of the person(s) providing the care.

**Common Minor Medical Conditions:**

1) **Conjunctivitis:**
   a. **Symptoms:** closed or partially closed eyelid, clear ocular discharge.
   b. **Treatment:** minor injuries to the eye or inflammation of the conjunctiva can be treated with application of triple antibiotic ophthalmic ointment to the affected eye once a day for 1-3 days.
   c. **Contact OCV:** If no improvement is observed in 3 days or if there is visible blood, pus, swelling of the globe, corneal ulceration or corneal rupture, the animal should be evaluated by the OCV veterinary staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

2) **Balanoposthitis or paraphimosis (inflammation of the penis or prepuce):**
   a. **Symptoms:** Swelling and redness of the prepuce or foreskin (balanoposthitis) and prolapse of the penis exterior to the prepuce or foreskin (paraphimosis). The exteriorized penis will be red and swollen and may bleed or become dry & necrotic.
   b. **Treatment:** Gently cleanse the penis with clean gauze or cotton soaked with warm water and diluted chlorhexidine, saline or other appropriate solution. Examine the area for entrapping fibers or bite wounds. Simple inflammation can often be treated with application of triple antibiotic ointment, chlorhexidine ointment or dilute chlorhexidine solution to the affected area once a day for 1-3 days. Breeding males should be separated from females until the condition is resolved.
   c. **Contact OCV:** Animals that are unable to urinate and those with entrapping fibers, infection, depression, lack of appetite and inflammation that do not heal appropriately should be evaluated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.
3) Bite wounds
   a. **Symptoms:** Minor dermal ulcerations, hair loss, evidence of minor bleeding
   b. **Treatment:** If minor bleeding is noted, apply gentle pressure to the wound till bleeding stops. If hair is matted or if there is discharge noted, gently cleanse wound with clean gauze soaked with warm water and diluted chlorhexidine or other appropriate solution. Minor skin trauma can be treated with application of triple antibiotic ointment, silver sulfadiazine, chlorhexidine ointment or dilute chlorhexidine solution to the affected area once a day for 1-3 days. Affected mice should be housed in isolation from other mice.
   c. **Contact OCV:** Animals with wounds penetrating a body cavity, wounds with serious hemorrhage, infection, lameness or loss of limb function, depression, lack of appetite, and wounds that do not heal appropriately should be evaluated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

4) Malocclusion
   a. **Symptoms:** Misaligned incisor teeth that do not wear down normally and overgrow. The condition can cause teeth to grow into the soft tissue of the mouth and will interfere with food consumption causing weight loss and runting. This is a hereditary condition and affected rodents should not be used for breeding
   b. **Treatment:** Check and trim incisor teeth at least every 2-3 weeks. Animals may require feed on the floor of the cage or soft food.
   c. **Contact OCV:** Animals with severe jaw abnormalities, those with misaligned molars that can not be trimmed easily or with teeth penetrating soft tissues of the mouth or broken teeth should be evaluated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

5) Ulcerative Dermatitis
   a. **Symptoms:** Mice are typically reported for pruritus and resulting skin irritation and ulceration. Lesions range from large skin ulcerations to hyperemic skin, alopecia and superficial scratches in the affected areas
   b. **Treatment:** All are most effective if begun **early** in the course of UD
      i. **Housing:** separating affected animals does help prevent future aggression from cage mates and eliminates fighting and barbering.
      ii. **Diet:** Increasing Omega-3 fatty acids in the diet with the following:
          a. Derm-caps – open and sprinkle on food once or twice a week to increase Omega 3 fatty acids **OR**
          b. Whole flax seeds or flaxseed meal - add teaspoon to cage twice a week to increase Omega 3 fatty acids
iii. Topical treatment
   a. Panalog- apply once a day for 1-3 days then 2-3 x per week OR
   b. Triple antibiotic ointment +/- pain relief- apply once a day for 1-3 days then 2-3 x per week
   c. Dilute chlorhexidine solution or chlorhexidine ointment- apply once a day for 1-3 days then 2-3 x per week

iv. Trimming of rear toenails every 10-14 days
   c. Contact OCV: Animals that do not improve with treatment should be evaluated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Systemic treatment may include steroids or antibiotics as advised by a veterinarian. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

6) Rectal Prolapse
   a. Symptoms: in the mouse, the distal portion of the rectum is prolapsed exterior to the body presenting as a small red mass at the anus. Can be confused with a vaginal or uterine prolapse. The rectal tissue may bleed or become dry & necrotic. Incidence varies with different mouse strains.
   b. Treatment: small rectal prolapses may be treated with application of Hemorrhoid Cream with Pramoxine, chlorhexidine ointment, petroleum jelly-based products such as Neosporin or Puralube or dilute chlorhexidine solution. Female breeding mice with prolapses should not be bred again.
   c. Contact OCV: Mice with bleeding, large and/or necrotic prolapses and mice with accompanying symptoms such as lethargy and diarrhea should be evaluated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Rectal prolapses may be a symptom of enteric disease and underlying parasitic, viral or bacterial infections so increased incidence of rectal prolapses in a colony should be reported to and investigated by the OCV Veterinary Staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

7) Supportive care for debilitated animals:
   a. Symptoms: Animals that may have difficulty reaching and gnawing on hard rodent pellets for various reasons such as dehydration, neurological disease, geriatric animals, animals with tumors, and post-partum or post-operative patients and weanlings.
   b. Treatments:
      i. Nutrical 1-2 ml/animal per day orally or in a dish
      ii. Rodent chow, water/nutrical softened rodent chow or commercial products such as gelatin packs or love mash in a dish in the bottom of the cage
iii. Individual housing of an animal with minor medical conditions may be necessary to reduce stress, more closely monitor the animal’s condition and food/water intake & waste output, and reduce the possibility of further trauma being caused by a cage mate.

iv. Long-term use of softened feed may result in overgrown teeth

v. Rodent chow may be routinely fed on the cage floor for 7 to 14 days for weanling and post-operative animals without notification of OCV or documentation in a medical record.

c. Severely debilitated animals should be evaluated by the OCV veterinary staff. Please maintain appropriate medical records for the individual.

Office of the Campus Veterinarian Contact Information: 509-335-6246
Emergency and after-hours veterinary care: 509-330-1871 http://www.campusvet.wsu.edu/

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