



INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE  
AND USE COMMITTEE

**IACUC POLICY # 7**  
**POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON**  
**FOOD AND WATER RESTRICTION OR DEPRIVATION**

**Definitions:**

**Standard Food Intake:** Animals should be fed palatable, noncontaminated, and nutritionally adequate food daily or according to their particular requirements (*Guide*, page 38).

**Standard Water Intake:** Ordinarily, animals should have access to potable, uncontaminated drinking water according to their particular requirements (*Guide*, page 40).

**Food or Water Restriction:** Any deviation from the standard food or water intake.

**Food Deprivation:** Withholding food for longer than 24 hours for simple stomach animals, or longer than 48 hours for ruminants.

**Water Deprivation:** Withholding water for longer than 12 hours.

**IACUC Policy and Guidelines**

Food or water restriction/deprivation involving laboratory animals, other than presurgical fasting, are often necessary for behavioral testing. Because these procedures may cause more than momentary or slight distress to the animals, the USC IACUC has established the following policy and guidelines:

1. Dietary or water restriction/deprivation must be scientifically justified in the Animal Use Proposal (AUP) and approved by the IACUC.
2. The least restriction/deprivation that will achieve the scientific objective should be used.
3. At least minimal quantities of food and fluid should be available to provide for development of young animals and to maintain long-term well-being of all animals.

4. A monitoring program for these animals must be described in the AUP. This should include physiological and behavioral parameters for assessment of pain or distress, including criteria (such as weight loss or hydration state) for temporary or permanent removal of the animals from the experiment. Body weight must not be allowed to drop below 80% of normal (taking into account the normal anticipated growth for that animal).
5. Precautions that should be used in cases of fluid restriction include daily recording of fluid intake and recording of body weight at least three times per week (including weekends and holidays). This daily log sheet must be kept with the animals.
6. Special attention should be given to ensuring that animals consume a suitable balanced diet because food consumption may decrease with fluid restriction.