



Cornell University Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education

CARE607.01 Treatment of Sick Animals

The intent of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to describe the process for the treatment of illness or injury to animals used for teaching and research at Cornell University. This SOP is intended for use by managers, animal care technicians, and Cornell Center for Animal Resources and Education (CARE) personnel. This SOP is approved by the Cornell Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and CARE. Any exemption must be approved by the IACUC prior to its application.

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1. Introduction

CARE routinely provides veterinary care for animals used at Cornell. For information on veterinary care provided by a non-CARE veterinarian, refer to the IACUC policy for [Primary Clinical Veterinary Care \(IACUC 0005.01\)](#). Veterinary contact information is posted in all animal facilities.

2. Materials

- Daily animal check record sheets
- Current CARE on-call list
- Emergency contact information
- Illness/injury report
- Orange sick card (or other identification method)
- Green treatment card and/or treatment sheets
- Deceased animal cards

3. Procedures

- a. Facility Manager's Responsibilities
 - i. Ensure all animal care personnel have undergone appropriate training to recognize sick animals before allowing any staff to perform unsupervised animal care.
 - ii. Assign staff schedule to ensure that all animals will be observed at least once daily, including weekends and holidays.

- iii. Provide record sheets to document daily animal checks by animal care personnel.
 - iv. Post veterinary, principal investigator (PI), and research personnel contact and emergency numbers in a prominent location, preferably near a phone.
 - v. Post the current CARE on-call list in a prominent location.
- b. Animal Care Technician's Responsibilities
- i. Observe each animal daily, including weekends and holidays, for signs of illness or injury.
 - ii. If an ill or injured animal is found, determine whether the animal requires immediate attention.
NOTE: If unsure of the status of the animal, always treat the case as requiring immediate attention.
 - iii. Proceed as follows:
 - Contact a CARE vet or tech directly.
NOTE: In cases that require immediate attention, do not just leave a voicemail message. If you are not able to reach someone directly, page the CARE group:
 1. Call the CARE Group Pager number 1-800-349-2456, this number is listed on the CARE on-call sheet posted in all animal facilities.
 2. Ask for the CARE group, describe the nature of the health concern, include a call back phone number and the word "urgent" in the message.
 3. Remain at the call back phone number for 5 minutes.
 4. If there is no response to the page within 5 minutes, send another group page.
 - Describe the nature and the urgency of the health concern to the CARE member.
 - State the location of the animal, the name of the researcher, and the name of the person reporting the concern.
 - Isolate the animal if necessary, or possible.
 - Flag the animal's cage with an orange Sick Animal Card or make sure the animal is identified, and fill in the illness/injury report.
 - Perform treatment and follow up as instructed by CARE.
 - Notify CARE if the animal gets worse or does not improve.
- c. CARE Responsibilities
- i. Respond to all pages, email and telephone messages regarding animal health concerns in a timely manner. Immediately attend to all pages or calls labeled as "urgent".
NOTE: Initial case assessment will be done by a CARE technologist, followed by a veterinary consultation when needed.
 - ii. Locate and examine the sick or injured animal.
 - iii. Assess the need for treatment and consider a plan to manage the case.
 - iv. Contact the PI to discuss the treatment or management plan.

- v. Obtain authorization from the PI to proceed with the plan **or** consult with the PI for an alternative plan.
- vi. Treat the animal as the individual health concern, veterinary consultation, and PI communication dictates.
- vii. Fill out the appropriate medical records as per [CARE SOP 542 Maintaining Medical Records](#).
- viii. If treatment is needed, place a green treatment card on cage and/or fill out a treatment sheet (depending on species) with specific instructions listing the treatment, the duration and who will be treating.
- ix. Arrange for a follow-up examination.
- x. Perform follow-up assessments and care until the case is resolved.
- xi. Document the dates and details of all observations and interventions throughout the case including the case resolution date.
- xii. File records of closed cases in the appropriate location for each facility.
- xiii. Keep records for 3 years after the end of the protocol.

4. Safety

- a. Working with research animals can trigger allergies; refer to [AUHSP Allergy Prevention Fact Sheet](#).
- b. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), refer to [CARE SOP 715](#).
- c. Refer to the [CARE Zoonoses](#) web page for zoonotic information specific to the species with which you are working.
- d. Observe [CARE SOP 707](#) for animal-related injury.

5. Contingencies

- a. NA

6. References

- Primary Clinical Veterinary Care Policy IACUC005.01:
<http://www.iacuc.cornell.edu/documents/IACUC005.01.pdf>
- [AUHSP Allergy Prevention Fact Sheet](#)
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/OHS/AllergyPreventionFactSheet.pdf>
- CARE SOP 542 Maintaining Clinical Records for Animal Research Models
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE542.pdf>
- CARE SOP 707 Animal Related injuries
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE707.pdf>
- CARE SOP 715 Personal Protective Equipment
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/documents/SOPs/CARE715.pdf>
- CARE zoonoses web page
<http://www.research.cornell.edu/CARE/zoonoses.html>