

Clemson University

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

Policy Number: 4.5

Policy Title: Mouse Toe Clipping

Section 1: Purpose

The intent of this policy is to describe when mouse toe clipping may be performed and the standard procedures for performing this technique.

Section 2: Scope

This policy applies to studies that require individual mouse identification, but animals are too young to properly apply other identification methods (e.g. ear punch, tag, microchip).

Section 3: Policy

Toe clipping of mice must be described in an approved Animal Use Protocol prior to the initiation of the procedure.

General Guidelines

- Mice up to 7 days of age may be toe clipped for identification purposes without the use of anesthesia.
- If removing toes from mice up to 7 days of age will not produce enough tissue to perform required genetic analysis, mice may be toe clipped from 8-14 day of age without anesthesia. This is only allowed if genetic testing is required and the goal is to eliminate tail clipping for genetic analysis.

Key Components of the Toe Clipping Procedure

- Clipping of the 1st digit/toe (i.e. thumb) is not allowed.
- Only the 3rd phalanx (i.e. last bone of a digit) is removed during the procedure.
- The toe must be aseptically prepared before clipping (i.e. wipe with betadine or alcohol).
- Only sharp scissors should be used. Fine points on the scissors are recommended.
- Scissors must be either sterilized (i.e. hot bead sterilizer) or sanitized with 70% ethanol or antiseptic solution (e.g. povidone iodine, chlorhexidine) between animals.
- Animals must be monitored continuously until bleeding has stopped. Bleeding may be stopped using a piece of gauze with gentle pressure between finger tips.
- OAR veterinary staff must be contacted promptly if the toe does not heal properly or if the animal cannot ambulate normally following the procedure.

