

SOP No: AHT 42

SUBJECT: Gavage in Mice and Rats (June 2015)

POLICY: Only Experienced staff may perform this procedure.

PRECAUTIONS: Gloves, eye protection, long sleeve gown, closed in shoes.

EQUIPMENT: A catheter, preferably flexible of the correct size for the animal.

PROCEDURE:

1. Flexible catheters should be used. It is important that the catheter be both the correct length and diameter. Measure the distance between the corner of the mouth and the last rib (stomach); the catheter should be no longer than this. If there is difficulty advancing the catheter, the diameter may be too large.
2. Use a single-handed restraint technique to hold the rat or mouse.
3. Extend the head and neck. Keep the nose, head and spine aligned so that the oesophagus is straight. DO NOT allow the rodent to tip back as you perform the gavage.
4. Use a free hand to guide the flexible catheter into the animal's mouth. Position the catheter toward the centre and run the end of the catheter along the roof of the mouth, then up and over the base of the tongue and gently down into the oesophagus.
5. Advance gently without resistance. If there is any resistance or the animal struggles, the catheter should be withdrawn and another attempt made. Don't hurry this procedure; if you accidentally place the catheter in the trachea or lungs, you may drown the animal. If you use too much force or lose control of either the catheter or the animal, you may tear the oesophagus.
6. Gavage volumes should not exceed 1% of body weight (a 20 gram mouse may have 0.2ml administered).

RECOMMENDATIONS: The gavage technique is best done in unanaesthetised animals with an intact swallow reflex. However, light anaesthesia may be required in some animals.
This technique is similar for the rat, mouse, guinea pig and rabbit

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CHAIR OF AEC

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