

POLICY ON EXPERIMENTAL SURGERY AND POSTOPERATIVE CARE

Environment

1. Identify an area in the laboratory away from doors and traffic flow (people walking by). Avoid areas close to air conditioning vents. Choose an area with a surface that is nonporous and easy to disinfect.
2. Clear the area of all equipment and clutter.
3. Disinfect all area surfaces.
4. Disinfect any equipment such as lights, warming apparatus, knobs, or handles used within the surgical environment.

Surgeon

1. The surgeon must wear a mask.
2. The surgeon must wear sterile surgical gloves.
3. The surgeon must use aseptic techniques, including the use of sterile surgical instruments. A single set of instruments can be used for up to five animals providing:
 - a. The instruments are rendered sterile either by autoclaving or chemical sterilization.
 - b. The instruments are not contaminated by breaks in aseptic technique. For example, dropping an instrument, handling of instruments by a non-sterile glove or hand, or touching the instrument to a contaminated surface such as the table top or animal hair.
 - c. The instruments are wiped clean from organic matter and soaked in a high level disinfectant for a minimum of 15 minutes between animals. This can be accomplished easily by using either multiple sets of instruments, or extending the lag time between surgeries.
 - d. The instruments are soaked in a high level disinfectant such as Intracal or Cidex. Use of alcohol for this purpose is not allowed.
 - e. The surgeon must change gloves at least after every five animals. The surgeon must change gloves immediately if the gloves 1) are contaminated by touching anything outside of the established sterile field (animal hair, table tops) or 2) are punctures, nicked, or torn.

Animal

1. Hair must be removed from the surgical site (e.g., #40 clipper blade, depilatory creme or shaved using a scalpel blade).
2. Skin must be disinfected using an antiseptic scrub or solution. Wiping with alcohol is not sufficient.
3. See also policy on postoperative care.

Postoperative Care

1. A person competent to provide postoperative care must remain with the patient until the endotracheal tube has been withdrawn and/or the animal is in sternal recumbency.
2. Animals can be extubated when actively swallowing or chewing.
3. Animals (except small rodents) should have temperature monitored every 30 minutes until body temperature is above 98.0 degrees F. Circulating hot water blankets or towels should be placed on or under the animal to hasten an increase in body temperature.
4. All animals should regain sternal recumbency or be mentally alert, depending on anesthesia and surgery performed.
5. All incision sites should be inspected continuously (every 15 minutes) for excessive hemorrhage for 2 to 3 hours postoperatively and for suture line integrity every 6-12 hours, until healed.
6. Intravenous catheters should remain in place until the animal is recovered fully.
7. Food and water should not be offered for 4 to 6 hours postoperatively.