

SIGNS FOR ASSESSING MORBID AND MORIBUND RODENTS

These guidelines are intended for assessing morbidity and impending mortality in rodents. Inexperienced personnel may not recognize easily signs associated with severe illness or distress in rodents, so, knowing these sometimes subtle clinical manifestations can aid animal care personnel and researchers to provide optimum care.

Signs for Judging Morbidity (disease/illness) in Rodents

- Rapid breathing
- Breathing rate slow, shallow and labored
- Rapid weight loss
- Ruffled fur (rough hair coat)
- Hunched posture
- Hypothermia or hyperthermia
- Ulcerative dermatitis or ulcerated tumors
- Inappetence
- Diarrhea or constipation

Signs for Judging the Moribund Condition (state of dying) in Rodents

Signs for morbidity plus:

- Impaired ambulation (unable to reach food or water)
- Evidence of emaciation
- Any obvious prolonged signs such as lethargy (drowsiness, aversion to activity, lack of physical or mental alertness), prolonged inappetence, bleeding, difficulty breathing, central nervous system disturbances, or chronic diarrhea or constipation
- Ataxia

Federal law authorizes the veterinary staff to euthanize animals in states of unauthorized or uncontrolled pain or distress. The PI is encouraged to work closely with the MSU laboratory animal veterinarians in cases where this situation may arise.