Introduction
The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) maintains oversight review for federally mandated rules and regulations with regard to animal research, ethics, misconduct and biomedical research for the University of Colorado Denver (UC Denver).

Policy Statement
This policy is intended to provide information on the requirements of food and water restriction and to establish procedures to be followed when restricting food and/or water. Standard housing of laboratory animals provides ad libitum access to food and water.

- **Water restriction** is defined as discontinuation of ad libitum access to water for longer than 12 hours. It encompasses total deprivation and regimented access to water.
  - It should be noted that rodents, especially mice, can become dehydrated very quickly.
- **Food restriction** is defined as discontinuation of ad libitum access to food for longer than 24 hours for simple stomach animals, or longer than 48 hours for ruminants.
  - It should be noted that rodents, especially mice, have a very high metabolism and gastrointestinal transit time. Therefore, they can be affected very quickly and significantly from food restriction.
- Written records must be maintained for each animal near the animal to document daily food and fluid consumption, hydration status, and any behavioral and clinical changes used as criteria for temporary or permanent removal of an animal from a protocol.
- Note on food or water restriction before surgeries in Rodents: Physiologically rodents are not able to vomit and therefore would not benefit from food or water restriction prior to surgery like a larger animal. Food and water restriction should therefore be reserved for specific scientific purposes.
- Alternatives to dietary restrictions are strongly encouraged. In the case of conditioned-response experiments, the use of a highly preferred food or fluid as a positive reinforcement, instead of restriction, is recommended.
- Water or Food Restriction for research purposes needs to be scientifically justified and a program established to monitor physiologic or behavioral parameters, including criteria for removal of the animal from the restriction regimen (such as weight loss or hydration state). Animals meeting those parameters should be returned to ad libitum access to food and water.
- Food or water restriction should only be applied to singly-housed animals, to prevent the occurrence of cannibalism.
- Animals under a food or water restriction regimen should be checked daily for signs of morbidity (abnormal posture, rough hair coat, difficulty with ambulation, self-mutilation).
- Precautions that should be used in cases of fluid restriction to avoid dehydration include:
  - Daily recording of fluid intake
  - Recording of body weight at least three times per week - or more often for smaller animals, such as rodents
  - Comparison of body weight to normal growth curves for that strain and/or littermates growth curves, if applicable. For older animals, comparison to the body weight pre-restriction is acceptable.
- In rodents, food consumption is known to decrease with water restriction.
- Protocols proposing water or food restriction may be approved by the IACUC if scientifically justified by the investigator.
• Each animal use protocol proposing the use of water or food restriction will be considered and reviewed by the IACUC on a case-by-case basis.

Per regulatory requirements, failure to comply with this policy may result in notification of your funding agency (e.g. NIH) and regulatory agencies (e.g. USDA) that your research has violated federal and/or local policies regarding the humane use of animals. This notification may affect continuous funding of your animal-related research. Further, depending on the violation, you may be required to take additional training and/or your privilege to conduct animal research at UC Denver might be temporarily suspended or even completely revoked.