

Rodent Behavioral Scoring

A



- Normal, healthy rodent
- Awake when person is in room (except hamsters)
- Well-groomed (clean, smooth coat)
- Explores environment or observes
- Builds/repairs nest
- Normal posture and gate with flat back and no limping, hopping, staggering, or dragging/carrying of limbs
- Readily eats food and drinks water
- Facial expressions: normal with no bulging to cheeks or face, whiskers and ears forward and alert

Note: Normal behavior may be accompanied by conditions which should be reported (e.g. skin trauma, eye lesions).

B



- Rodent with slight or subtle behavioral changes
- May not groom adequately and coat may be a little oily or rough
- May have porphyrin staining on the coat indicating stress (rats)
- Eating and drinking adequately, but less active than normal
- May rest in "hunched" position (but this is transitory)
- Less interest in environment, other animals or people
- May have gait abnormalities or other signs of trauma/illness (e.g. nasal or ocular discharge, rectal prolapse)
- Facial expressions: mild cheek and facial bulge, eyes squinting, ears and whiskers may be held closer to head

Note: This behavior may be the result of experimental manipulation or illness

C



- Rodent definitely not acting normally
- Reluctant to move
- Rests upright with the back hunched (sick rodent posture)
- Back stays hunched when animal moves
- Animal will move if prodded with finger
- Not eating or drinking normally
- Poorly groomed (haircoat is oily, dirty and stands on end)
- Facial expressions: cheek and facial bulge is significant, eyes squinting or closed, ears and whiskers may be held close to head
- Notify veterinary staff immediately

Note: There should be a time limit in the protocol for animals at Score C, otherwise veterinary services will determine if the animals should be euthanized.

D



- Rodent is MORIBUND (near death and will not recover)
- Animal is either hunched in sick rodent posture or lying on its side
- Only sign of life is breathing which is shallow and either slow or rapid
- Eyes sunken or closed
- If prodded, animal will only respond minimally
- May feel cool to touch
- PI should be notified that euthanasia must be performed
- Notify veterinary staff immediately