

## Best Practices When Using Depilatory Cream for Hair Removal on Rodents

When used properly, chemical depilatory agents (Nair®, Veet®, etc.) can be a very effective method for removing hair on rodents prior to approved surgery and other procedures. To ensure animal health and well-being when using these or related products, please review the following best practices:

- Appropriate hair removal is often best performed with the animal anesthetized. Using a method approved on your ASAF, anesthetize the mouse or rat prior to hair removal
- Shave as much of the hair as possible in the region of interest, using care not to cause clipper burn
- Apply a thin, solid layer of depilatory cream to the desired area using a glove or cotton swab. *If using cream on the animal's head, be sure to first protect the animal's eyes with ophthalmic ointment*
  - Allow contact time of 30 to 60 seconds. For sensitive areas (e.g., head, abdomen, medial limbs), it's best to stay closer to the 30-second mark
  - For posterior regions with thicker skin (e.g., shoulders, back, lateral limbs) application time may extend closer to 60 seconds
- Once the contact time has been reached, promptly wipe off the depilatory cream using warm water and a swab/gauze. Rinse the area well and repeat the rinse until all cream has been removed. **Note: this is one of the most important steps in this process. If the cream is left on the rodent's skin for too long, it can cause chemical burns and severe discomfort.** If additional hair remains, dry the area thoroughly and repeat the process once. If hair remains after conducting the process a second time, contact OCV to discuss appropriate next steps.

Finally, please remember that all procedures, including hair removal, must be described in your IACUC-approved ASAF. Personnel who perform these procedures must also be listed on the approved protocol and complete any procedure-specific training prior to working with the animals.

For questions, concerns, or requests for additional training on the use of depilatory cream, please contact the Office of the Campus Veterinarian at [or.ocv.alert@wsu.edu](mailto:or.ocv.alert@wsu.edu) or 509-335-6246

### Reference

<https://animalcare.umich.edu/announcements/air-about-removing-hair-follow-these-best-practices-using-nair%C2%AE#:~:text=Many%20labs%20at%20U%2DM%20regularly,to%20surgery%20or%20other%20procedures>

### Revision History:

Revision	Author	Revisions Made	Replaces version