

The Use of Rodent Environmental Enrichment Devices at the NCI at Frederick
A Notice from the NCI at Frederick Animal Care and Use Committee

The *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*, the standard used to assess quality laboratory animal science programs across the world, states that, “Well-conceived enrichment provides animals with choices and a degree of control over their environment, which allows them to better cope with environmental stressors.”¹ AAALACi and the animal welfare organizations have placed emphasis on the use of environmental enrichment devices to ensure that current practices fulfill this guideline².

**All animals must be provided with an enrichment device*
unless scientifically justified.
The type of enrichment device* will be determined by the facility
management in conjunction with the investigative staff.**

Please keep in mind that for certain studies (e.g., behavioral) the ACUC understands that the use of environmental enrichment devices may provide unwanted variables in your research results. Any studies that do not wish to utilize enrichment devices must provide justification to the ACUC on the Animal Study Proposal Form. Exclusions for the use of enrichment devices will be made by the ACUC on a case-by-case basis.

Our goal is to promote the well-being of animals utilized at the NCI at Frederick and to ensure that investigators obtain reliable scientific results. The implementation of this program is focused on achieving both of these goals. Please direct any questions or concerns to the ACUC Office (stahlam@mail.nih.gov). We appreciate your cooperation with this endeavor.

*** Types of enrichment that should be considered: various types of additional bedding materials, nestlets, disposable igloos, polycarbonate tunnels/tubes, and food treats.**

¹ Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8th Edition 2011

² Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care International (<http://www.aaalac.org>)