

# Visual Guide to the Mouse Estrous Cycle

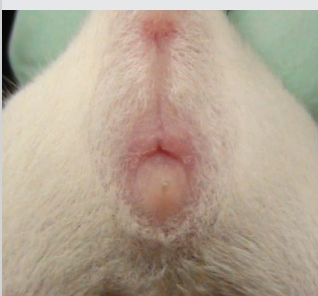
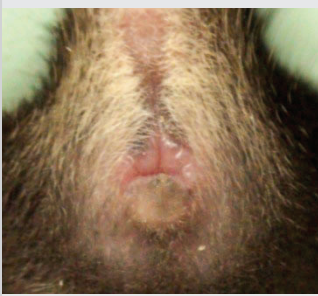
## Improve Timed-Mating Performance

**Visual Quick Guide:** Females in proestrus or estrus can be identified quickly and easily by the appearance of their external genitalia. These females are likely to be receptive to mating when paired with sexually mature males. The presence of a copulatory plug can be used to verify that mating has occurred. Stage of the estrous cycle in mice can be determined by cytology or by visual examination of the external genitalia.

### \* Stages most receptive to mating

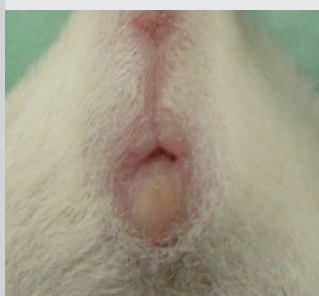
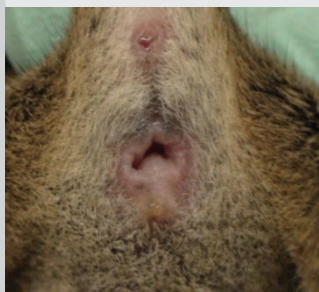
#### Proestrus\*

- Very swollen
- Pink
- Moist
- Wrinkling



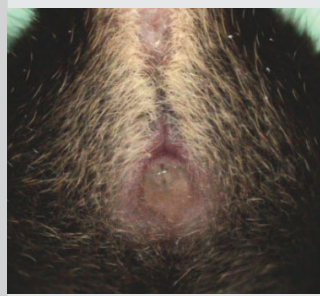
#### Estrus\*

- Less swollen
- Less pink
- Less moist
- Wrinkling



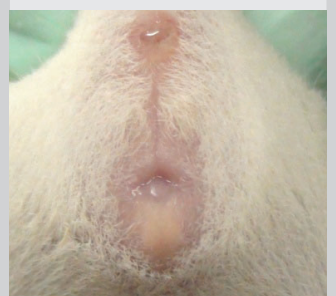
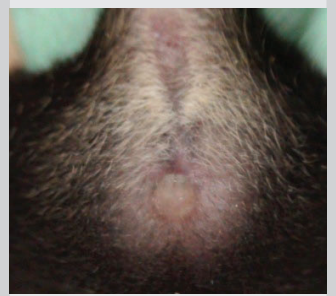
#### Metestrus

- Not swollen
- Not pink
- Dry
- No wrinkling



#### Diestrus

- Not swollen
- Not pink
- Dry
- No wrinkling



Byers SL, Wiles MV, Dunn SL, Taft RA. Mouse estrous cycle identification tool and images. *PLoS One* 2012; 7(4):e35538. [PMID:22514749]

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