

Habitat Needs

Housing

- Other than size, mice and rats have essentially the same requirements for housing. A wire cage is best, a minimum of 12 x 24 inches of floor space for 1-2 rats or 4-5 mice. Glass cages do not allow for good ventilation. The wire cage also encourages your pet's instinct for climbing and offers exercise and stimulation. A home with multiple levels provides more exercise space and enrichment.
- If choosing a mouse, be sure the bar spacing on the habitat is close enough together to avoid escapes!

Enrichment

- Rats and mice should have a wheel to run on in their cage.
- They should also have plenty of things to chew ex., wood, dog bones.
- Rats and mice also like to have something to sleep in, a hide to escape to.

Litter Training

- It is possible to litter-train rats and mice. They often times pick a corner as their potty, place a tiny litter pan in that specific corner.

Nutrition

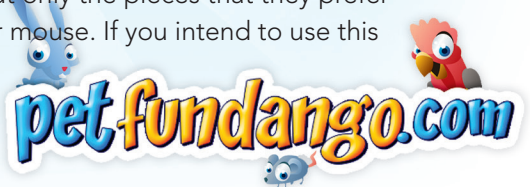
- Rats and mice are omnivorous (much like humans); they require both plant and animal protein sources. In general, adult rats and mice need lower levels of protein and fat than do baby rats and mice. Unless of course, you are feeding a pregnant female.
- The best diet for rats and mice is lab blocks. Lab block is a special food made to exactly meet the nutritional requirements of rats and mice. Also provide food supplements in its diet; add up to 20% of the pets diet. Please see "Good Foods/Treats" to see what the 20% should be made up of.
- An adult rat or mouse that is not pregnant should consume about 4 lab blocks daily.
- The average rat or mouse drinks approximately 30 ml of water per 100 gram of body weight per day.

Good Food/Treats

- Companies that have specially formulated lab blocks for rats and mice are KAYTEE, Vitakraft, PMI International.
- Dog biscuits are a preferred treat, along with other specially formulated commercial treats.
- Offer small amounts of fresh fruit and vegetable daily, remove uneaten pieces a few hours later.
- Wholegrain (brown) rice, vegetables, grains (wheat, barley, oats, millet), wholemeal break, etc. and some animal protein. Lean meat scraps can be given as animal protein.

Bad Food/Treats

- Packaged mixed grain diets that can be purchased at your local pet store are generally not recommended since they often contain high corn or seed content, and can be nutritionally incomplete. These types of diets have the rat or mouse picking out only the pieces that they prefer to eat, leaving food not eaten as well as an under-nourished rat or mouse. If you intend to use this type of base for your pet's diet, try to stick with a mix that is higher in soy than corn and that contains essential fatty acids.



- Avoid raw sweet potato, green bananas, green potato skin and eyes, wild insects, raw tofu, orange juice.

Water

- Water can be supplied in a water bottle and should be changed daily.
- Check the valve on the water bottle to ensure it's working properly.

Health

Potential rat health issues

- Respiratory problems, skin problems, lumps and bumps, balance/head tilt problems, urinary/uterine bleeding.

Potential mice health issues

- Respiratory Mycoplasmosis (symptoms are similar to a cold), eye infections, tumors, kinked tail (genetic defect), waltzing (balance disorder), endoparasites (worms), skin problems (allergies).

Extra Information

- The life expectancy of a rat is 2-3 years; a mouse is about 1.5 - 4 years.
- A rat's or mouse's temperature is regulated by its tail.
- Rats and mice have poor eyesight but their senses of hearing and smell are many times more sensitive than a human.
- A group of rats or mice is called a mischief.
- Rats and mice have belly buttons.
- Rats and mice memorize their environment by body and muscle movement alone. Therefore if you move something in a rat's environment, it will continue to move around it as if it were still there.
- Mice are afraid of rats.
- Rats often kill mice and partially eat them.
- Mice communicate in both human audible range and in ultrasound range.
- Mice can make their own vitamin C.

