



MICE & RATS CARE GUIDE





RATS & MICE MAKE FANTASTIC PETS



"Rats and mice are intelligent, affectionate creatures. They like to spend a lot of time resting and grooming themselves, and their personalities will thrive with lots of physical and mental stimulation"

SHELTER & HOUSING

Rats and mice are interactive, intelligent and highly sociable animals. Ideally you need to keep at least two rats or mice (of the same sex) together at all times to maximise their wellbeing. (Note: male mice are happier living alone).

Provide your pets with a cage that is as large and interesting as possible, preferably with multiple levels for enrichment and exercise. Also ensure that it is easy to clean and well ventilated. We have a wide variety of cages at Happy Pet Place to suit all your needs.

Rats and mice love to burrow and nest, so plenty of suitable bedding needs to be provided such as shredded paper, hemp or pelleted recycled paper 'cat-litter'. We use & recommend Kats Korner, it is produced from grains, hay and wood, along with odour and moisture absorbents. It is completely biodegradable and can be released in your garden as mulch. Mini Hemp is also another great option.

Regular cleaning of the cage and changing of their bedding to avoid ammonia build up is essential to ensure a hygienic environment and to reduce the smell. For thorough cleaning of the cage, we recommend using **CSI Urine Small Animal Cage Cleaner**, which uses natural enzymes to deliver an optimal clean and reduce odour.

Ensure that the area your cage is kept in will not become too hot as mice can be prone to heat stress. Also make certain that the cage is predator-proof and escape-proof and protects them from any adverse weather conditions such as heat, cold, rain, wind and other environmental dangers.

For extra enrichment, you can provide cardboard boxes, hard plastic tubes or similar objects for 'hiding' places and sleeping areas. We have a wide range of cage accessories to help with the well being of your pets, including chews and treats, tunnels & housing.

Ensure you use dripper-type water bottles and/or water bowls for access to fresh water, and a separate bowl for food.

HANDLING

Rats and mice are delicate creatures and need to be handled carefully and gently to avoid injury. With enough handling they will climb on you and fall asleep on your lap.

FEEDING REQUIREMENTS

Mice and rats should be fed appropriate amounts of good quality mice/rat pellets (look for a protein content of 16% minimum & fat content of 4-5%) plus a small combination of fresh fruits and vegetables.

We use & recommend **Science Selective Mouse Food & Rat Food** for optimal complete and balanced nutrition delivered in a crunchy, tasty pellet.

Some examples of suitable fruit and vegetables are: apples, pears, banana, melons, stone fruits, citrus fruits, broccoli, cabbage (not red cabbage), endive, carrots, Bok choy/other Asian greens, celery, parsley, berries, fresh corn (small amount only) and peas.

Provide clean fresh water at all times, and any changes to the diet should be made gradually to avoid gastrointestinal upsets.



KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RATS & MICE



RATS

- Male rats are larger than females (can grow double the size) of females and they generally smell more.
- Male rats are generally cuddlier and love to sleep more than female mice. They should have more nesting / burrowing places, while female rats are more energetic and love to explore.
- Rats can be litter trained! They generally pick a corner for their toilet. Place a small animal - safe litter such as Mini Hemp in this area. This will help keep the smell at bay.
- Rats can be trained to do tricks! You can teach them to jump through hoops, go through tunnels etc.
- Rats need same-species companions to be able to communicate with, if they are kept alone they can often find themselves in depressive and isolated state. Both male and females should be kept in pairs or groups.
- Males are susceptible to respiratory infections. Generally it's a genetic condition, however, they can develop the condition through their environment i.e. dusty cages, ammonia build up. Their waste builds ammonia, and is very strong this can cause issues, so clean enclosure regularly.
- Females are susceptible to developing tumors over time, please consult your vet if you have any concerns.
- Life expectancy of rats is 2 - 3 years (approximately).

MICE

- Mice are smaller than rats, with both male and female mice showing different personality traits.
- Male mice are solitary animals, and if placed unrelated males will usually fight to the death.
- Female mice need the companionship of each other. They will need to be in pairs, or groups of odd numbers; 3, 5, 7 etc. This allows them to develop their own hierarchy. Please note that they may still fight from time to time but you must let them sort it out. If females are kept alone they can often find themselves in depressive and isolated state..
- Male mice are generally cuddlier and love to sleep more than female mice. They should have more nesting / burrowing places.
- Female mice are more energetic than male mice, they love to climb, jump and explore. Their enclosure should be a taller allowing them to climb. Keep changing their enclosure around adding different toys and items for them to use and explore to ensure they don't get bored.
- Mice are susceptible to tumors, especially females. Respiratory infections can easily develop if mice are kept in a dirty, dusty or in a low ventilated environment.
- Life expectancy of mice is 1.5 - 3 years (approximately).