



Rats

CONTENTS:

1. Feeding
2. Accessories
3. Housing
4. Sanitation
5. Health Care
6. Special Needs
7. Life cycle
8. Expert Help
9. Supplies Checklist

FUN FACT!

Rats are intelligent active pets who love to interact with their owner. They are a lot like little dogs and will learn their name and come when you call them. They are playful and will wrestle with their owner's hand. They can learn lots of tricks too.

Rats are affectionate and love to be petted. Some rats will lick their owner like a dog. They are very clean animals and groom themselves several times a day.

Rats are easy to care for and make great interactive pets for people of all ages!

One rat, or more?

Because rats are so playful and social, it's best to get at least two so they can play together. A single rat can do well if it can be with you for several hours a day.

Male or female?

As adults, male rats are larger than females and tend to be more laid back, making better lap pets. Female rats tend to be very active. Males are easy to identify by their large testicles.



Feeding

The basic rat diet of a young rat should be a commercial rat block (80%) supplemented with a fortified grain mix (20%). As an adult it should be a Commercial rat block (90%) supplemented with a fortified grain mix (10%) It is also good to give rats a wide variety of fruits and veggies and other healthy foods. Treats are great for training and strengthening the bond between you and your rats and can comprise 10% of their diet.



Accessories

Rats need a water bottle, a dry food dish and a dish for moist food. For their house choose from plastic, wood, or grass houses and/or a hammock. They also enjoy an exercise wheel, tubes, and climbing toys such as ladders, ropes, and branches, and chew toys.

Housing

A rat cage should be at least 24" X 12" X 12" tall, and the bigger the better to provide room for lots of fun toys. The floors of the cage should be solid, not wire, to protect their feet. Wire cages provide better ventilation, but large aquariums can be used. For bedding you can choose from aspen shavings or pet litter of recycled paper or organic pellets. Do not use clay litter or cedar shavings. Some rats will use a litter box. Rats must be kept at temperatures below 90 degrees F and they require complete darkness at night.

Sanitation

Clean the cage and accessories weekly. Be sure to remove all stored food and scrub all parts of the water bottle by soaking it in a bleach/water solution for no less than 20 min to properly sterilize then wash with hot soapy water, rinse thoroughly, and replace the bottle every 24 months.

Health Care

The most common health problem in rats is a respiratory infection, so don't keep anything with a strong smell in the cage & keep the cage clean. Having female rats spayed will help prevent mammary tumors. They need chew toys to help keep their teeth down. If they don't have things to chew on this can cause the teeth to over grow and make it impossible for the rat to eat.

Special Needs

If you let your rat play on the floor, the room must be "rat-proofed" to remove electrical cords and other items that shouldn't be chewed. If you let your rat play on your couch or bed, a washable throw cover will help protect your furnishings. Never grab the tip of a rat's tail because the skin will come off.



Life Cycle

Rats live an average of 2-2 1/2 years, although it's possible for them to live 4 years. Rats can breed as early as 5 weeks of age but should not until 3-4 months. The gestation period is 21-23 days and the average litter size is 12. The babies are called pups and their eyes open at 2 weeks. The pups can be weaned at 4 weeks, but highly recommended to wait till 5 weeks minimum.

Expert Help

If you have questions about your rat, do not hesitate to contact us. We will be happy to help you choose a rat care book for more complete information. You, your veterinarian, and the staff here at the store will form the team, which will be responsible for your rat's well being.

SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

Large Cage	Water Bottle	Hammock
Bedding	Litter Box	Rat Food
Food Dish	Activity Toys	Treats
Nesting Stuff	Chew Toys	Critter Cubes
Mineral Chews	Vitamins	



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