

RAT

- Rats are charming pets and love to interact with their owners.
- They are very smart and can learn their names and simple tricks.
- Rats are nocturnal and will be most active in the middle of the night.
- They are easily scared by sudden movements and loud noises, though they are willing to be held if you remember to be quiet and are gentle.
- It is best to keep pairs.
- A rat's average life expectancy is up to 2-3 years.
- Rats have limited vision. They rely on their keen senses of smell and hearing.

Diet

Rats should always be given a dry, fortified diet. They should also be given one tablespoon of chopped veggies like broccoli, kale, or carrots daily. You should also treat your rat to a tablespoon of freshly chopped fruit such as pears, strawberries and grapes twice a week. All fresh food should be given in small quantities as it may cause an upset stomach. Remove any uneaten food within 24 hours. Additionally, always keep chew sticks in the cage to keep your pet's front teeth trimmed, as they are constantly growing.

Housing

Rats love to climb so a wire, plastic or glass cage with a snug-fitting lid will allow them to play without being able to escape. If you do use a wire cage, then make sure the space between the wires is no larger than 1/2 inch and there is a solid bottom. The minimum cage size should be 24"X12"X12". The cage should be kept in a cool, draft-free area, with low humidity and out of direct sunlight. Additionally, provide a 1-2" layer of good soft bedding that is clean, non-toxic, absorbent, and relatively dust free. Recycled newspaper or wood shavings (aspen is best) are preferred bedding. Do not use cedar or pine shavings which can lead to respiratory problem. Change the bedding once or twice a week. Remember to wash, rinse and dry the cage bottom, food dishes and water bottle each week. An exercise wheel, with a solid bottom, will encourage your rat to be active.

Handling & Care

It's very important to handle your rat gently. Taming rats is simply a matter of gaining their confidence. Always be patient, gentle, and move slowly. Making friends with your pet and getting him accustomed to you can often be accomplished by offering treats. To hold them, let her become aware of your hand, then hold her gently yet firmly around the chest, and support her back feet with your other hand. Never pick her up by the tail as they are quite fragile. At least 1 hour a day of exercise outside the cage is essential for good health.

Grooming

Rats, especially males, have a tendency to release an odor. Therefore, they should be cleaned with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipe once a week, or as necessary.

Health

Rats are healthy when they have bright eyes, eats & drinks normally, has well-formed droppings and is active. Contact your veterinarian if you notice weight loss or any of these symptoms:

- Refusal to eat or drink
- Labored breathing, wheezing, sneezing
- Diarrhea/ Change in droppings
- Dull and/or receding eyes
- Overgrown teeth
- Inactive / Lethargic
- Head tilt
- Excessive hair loss / scratching
- Rough hair coat



RAT CHECKLIST

- Bedding
- Rat Food
- Fresh Fruit and Veggies
- Heavy Food Dish
- Water Bottle
- Cage with Solid Bottom
- Exercise Wheel
- Hiding Places/Hut
- Toys
- Branches and Ropes
- Chewing Sticks
- Cleaner and Disinfectant
- Book