

Rat Care Sheet

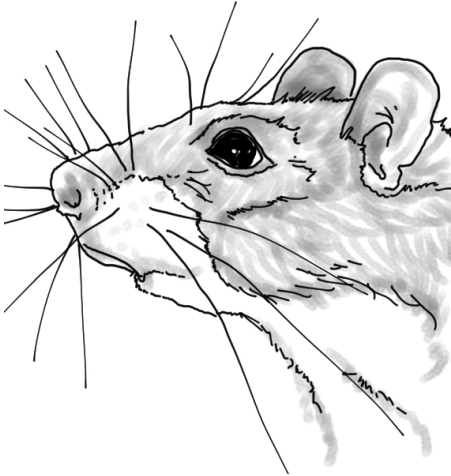


Your Pets Super Store

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Congratulations on your new pet. Rats are clean, intelligent pets with affectionate personalities. They love to interact with their human family and can be taught a variety of tricks. They are very social and do best with at least one same-sex rat companion to thrive. Kept singly they will need plenty of daily interaction with their owner. With proper care rats live two to three years. Types of rats that are generally available are standard, dumbo and hairless.

GENERAL-----

Rats need daily attention to become trusting and easy to handle. Their eyesight is poor but their sense of smell is excellent. Offering food and treats such as Kaytee Fiesta Yogurt Dipped treats from your hand will allow you to tame and train your rat quickly. Avoiding loud noises and sudden movements will help to build confidence. It won't take long for your rat to enjoy being held or take a ride around on your shoulder or in a pocket. At least one hour a day of exercise outside the cage is essential for optimal health, and great fun for the whole family! Keep an eye on your rat to prevent him from chewing wires or wandering too far away. There are many hazards around the house for a small animal.

HOUSING-----

Choose as large a cage as possible for your rats, ideally 18" x 36" with several levels and room for toys such as a solid exercise wheel, ladders, tubes and a hammock. Provide plenty of things to climb on and chew will keep your pet busy. The cage floor should be solid, as wire can injure rats' feet. Place the cage out of direct sunlight and drafts, in an area with family activity. Cover the floor with safe bedding such as Carefresh or aspen shavings. Cedar shavings contain harmful oils and should never be used for rats. For your rats' comfort add a nest box filled with soft shredded paper. Rats are intelligent animals and can be trained to use a litter box in their cage.

DIET-----

A healthy diet consists of dry food like Kaytee Forti-diet or Fiesta Max and a variety of seeds, nuts, grains, dried vegetables and fruit. Dry food should always be available in a heavy crock or metal dish that can't be easily dumped over or a food hopper. Only buy enough food to last one month and keep it in an airtight container. Remember to provide a sipper bottle refilled with fresh water daily. Healthy treats such as Sunseed Pumpkin Patch Bars can be offered, in moderation. A rat's teeth grow continuously. They need safe toys and

treats that they can gnaw on to remain healthy. Avoid plastic dishes and toys, swallowing small pieces can harm your rat.

CLEANING-----

Scoop soiled areas as needed. Remove all bedding and wash the entire cage, food bowls, and water bottle weekly. Use a bottle brush and hot soapy water to wash and rinse thoroughly. Always rinse and dry the cage thoroughly before adding fresh bedding.

HEALTH-----

Good hygiene and nutrition can insure your pet rat a long and healthy life. As you spend time with your rat you will come to recognize it's own unique behaviors. A sick rat will show signs of illness such as; changes in behavior, appetite, haircoat, droppings and urine. Noisy breathing, discharge from the eyes or nose, sneezing, diarrhea and scratching are all signs that indicate your rat needs help. One of our pet care specialists can help you with medications or if necessary direct you to a veterinarian that treats pet rats.

FERTILITY-----

Rats can reach sexual maturity at five weeks old. It's important that they are accurately sexed and separated before five weeks of age to prevent health risks and unwanted babies.

CHECKLIST-----

- _____ cage, as large as possible
- _____ water bottle and bottle brush
- _____ heavy food dish or hopper for dry food
- _____ Carefresh or aspen bedding
- _____ fresh rat food
- _____ variety of wooden chew sticks and toys
- _____ safe health treats for training
- _____ litter box (optional)
- _____ hiding / sleeping box
- _____ sleeping nest material
- _____ cleaner
- _____ folding pet play pen