



Practice Limited to Birds, Reptiles and Exotics

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## ***Rat & Mouse Health Care***

**Rats** are intelligent, social and enjoy human interaction. Rats are best kept as same sex pairs. Rats like to explore and will chew on furniture or electrical cords if allowed. **Mice** are social, alert, and extremely active. They like to roam and explore.

**Rat average size** is 8 inches long. **Life Span:** up to 5 years with proper care.

**Mouse average size** is 3 inches long. **Life Span:** up to 3 years with proper care.

### ***Different types of small pets should not be housed together***

**Diet requirements are:** We recommend feeding a high quality rat food/mouse food/ lab block.\*\*\*Small amounts of fruits and vegetables can be offered daily, but the consumption should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Use clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine free water. Your pet's water should be changed daily.\*\*\* Do not feed chocolate, alcohol or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems. **\*\*\* Food and water should be available at all times \*\*\***

**Housing requirements:** The habitat should be made of glass, wire or metal. Provide the largest habitat possible because plenty of room is needed for exercise and play. Make sure the habitat is escape proof and has a solid top and bottom. Both rats and mice can chew thru plastic cages. Provide 1 – 2 inches of bedding in the bottom of the cage. Proper bedding includes hardwood shavings\*\*\* (Aspen or Pine), pelleted wood bedding or recycled paper products. Remove wet spots daily. Change bedding at least weekly. Clean habitat and its contents once a week with mild soap and water. Rinse and allow the cage to dry completely before placing your pet back into the habitat. **Cedar may be harmful and should not be used.**

**Temperature:** They acclimate well to average household temperatures. Be cautious of extreme temperature changes they can be overheated or become hypothermic if left in a cold room. Never place the habitat in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.

**Accessories:** Many accessories are available at pet stores. Some include hiding places, exercise toys, plastic tunnels, ladders, exercise wheels, educational books and chew sticks.

**Behavior:** Rats and mice are active at night, called nocturnal. Both rats and mice like to chew to maintain proper teeth conformation, so be careful of electrical wiring and valuable furniture when your pets are out of their cage. Chew sticks always should be available. Both species like to play and hide in objects.

**Grooming & Hygiene:** Rats and mice stay clean and do not need baths. Spot cleaning with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipes may be done if needed. Consult a veterinarian if their teeth or nails appear too long. Wash your hands before and after handling your pet. Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems should consult with their physician before purchasing a rodent.

**Health Issues:** Contact your exotic animal veterinarian immediately if you notice any of the following symptoms: diarrhea, hair loss, weight loss, overgrown teeth, growths or swellings, abnormal breathing, skin lesions, lethargy or lack of energy, eye and/or nasal discharge.

***We strongly recommend annual health examinations on all exotics!***

