

Rats

Rattus norvegicus domestica



Approximate life span: 2-3 years
Estimated adult size: 300-500 grams
Difficulty Level: Beginner



Domestic rats, also called fancy rats, are a species of rodent popular as pets due to their friendly and intelligent natures. Rats are omnivores and will enjoy a variety of healthy people foods as a part of their daily diet.

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

Rats are highly social and should be housed in groups whenever possible. Cages should provide at least 2 cubic feet of space per rat, with bar spacing no wider than 1" for adult males and ½" for adult females or juvenile rats. Metal cages are best as they can chew and escape from plastic enclosures. A variety of chew toys, hammocks, and shelves to climb and hide should be offered. Cages and shelves should have a solid bottom as wire flooring can lead to foot problems. Bedding can consist of paper-based litter or fleece and should be changed at least weekly. Avoid wood shavings as they can irritate skin and contribute to respiratory disease.

DIETARY NEEDS

Pellets: A quality rodent block should be offered at all times, with protein content at approximately 25%. This should be the bulk of their daily diet.

Fresh Foods: Fruits, vegetables, and whole grain cereals may be offered as 20% of a healthy diet.

Treats: Seeds and nuts can be given sparingly as a treat.

Chewing: Because their teeth never stop growing, wood sticks, blocks, and shelves provide a variety of ways to wear their teeth down to prevent dental disease.

RECOMMENDED VETERINARY CARE

- Annual exams
- Spay/neuter
- Common illnesses: respiratory disease, kidney disease, tumors