

Mouse and Rat Care and Diseases

Lifespan and housing

Average lifespan for a pet mouse is 1-2 years. Average lifespan for a pet rat is 2-3 years. Cages should be made of wire, stainless steel, or durable plastic. The cage should have a solid floor (not be made of wire) and mice and rats need ample bedding to nest in.

Adult mice need at least 15 square inches of floor space, and a cage height of 5 inches.

Adult rats need at least 40 square inches of floor space, and a cage height of 7 inches.

Mice and rats can be housed singly or in groups.

Bedding should be dust free, non-toxic, and absorbent. *At least one inch of bedding should be provided for burrowing behavior.* **Carefress bedding** (can be purchased at most pet stores) is best. You can also use shredded paper. *Do not use wood shavings*, as these can lead to certain respiratory diseases.

Diet

Pelleted mouse or rat diets should be used. Do not feed seed diets!

Treats can be given, but only in very small quantities. Acceptable treats include sunflower seeds, yogurt treats, Cherrios, strawberries, melon, plums, bananas, and apples.

Common diseases

Pneumonia

Cancer (especially mammary gland cancer)

Diarrhea