

CARING FOR PET MICE



Recommendations

Sponsored by

The Governor's Commission on the Humane Treatment of Animals

Basic Mouse Care

Domestic pet mice are usually referred to as "fancy mice". They are curious and charming pets, but very fragile. Children should be supervised when playing with them.

- Average is 3 ½ inches, not including the tail. Mice may live up to 3 years.
- Mice should be obtained from a reputable breeder or your local animal shelter.
- Mice are very social with their own kind, so owning more than one would be ideal. A pair of females is recommended or two males if they were introduced at a very early age.
- Because pet mice are very intelligent social animals, they can quickly become bored if enough activity and stimulation are not provided. This can result in undesirable activities such as excess chewing or gnawing, constant moving or rearrangement of accessories, or regular attempts to escape.

Housing

- A large 10 gallon aquarium with a wire cover works well. There also should be several inches of bedding. This set-up will work for up to 3-4 mice. Wire cages used for gerbils are dangerous because of the space between the wires. If a little finger can fit between them then the mouse will be able to escape or get injured trying.
- Several inches of bedding of aspen, hardwood shavings or recycled paper products MUST be provided. AVOID cedar or pine shavings, they are hazardous to their health.

- Small boxes or flower pots should be included as hiding places. Mice love to run through "tunnels" like PVC tubing, or something made of strong, safe cardboard. AVOID cedar or pine shavings, they are hazardous to their health.
- Tree branches to climb on will be much appreciated, ladders also, plus plenty of safe things to chew on. Toys such as for a parakeet, or small parrot are good. Mice love exercise wheels. Wheel should be solid, without wire rungs to catch their feet or tails.
- The habitat should be located away from direct sunlight or drafty areas. Mice are VERY prone to colds and heat stroke.

Diet

- The main part of the diet should be good commercial rodent chow, either block or pellet form. The food selected should contain at least 18 percent fiber, 16 percent protein and 4 percent fat.
- It is recommended that mice get small portions of fruit and veggies every day such as peas, broccoli, carrots, apples and bananas.
- Mice should NOT be given chocolate, corn, candy, carbonated or caffeinated drinks, or any kind of sticky food like peanut butter or toffee, junk food, peanuts, or uncooked beans or onions.
- Fresh water should be provided via a water bottle with a drinking tube that attaches to the side of the cage.

Additional Recommendations

- The cage should be tidied up daily; with a scrub down once a week. Remove

droppings, old food, and soiled bedding every day. At least once a week replace the bedding after scrubbing the cage down with warm soapy water.

- Male mice are more odorous than females and will need their habitats cleaned thoroughly more than once a week.
- Like every rodent, mice teeth never stop growing. So it is essential that they have something they can have available all day to gnaw on, such as: untreated, unpainted pieces of wood, fruit tree branches (avoids splintering), dog biscuits or rawhide chews.
- Once a mouse has been hand tamed, they should be let out of **their** cages

daily for at least an hour's supervised play time. This can be considered **MANDATORY** for maintaining a happy, healthy mouse. It is recommended to do so in a small, secure area where your pet won't get stuck in furniture or chew electrical wires, etc.

Veterinary Care

Common signals that a mouse is sick are sneezing, coughing, difficulty breathing, weight loss and lethargy. They also easily get external parasites like lice, fleas. Veterinary care should be sought for a sick mouse.

Possible Signs of Illness, Neglect, or Intentional Cruelty

Appearance of Animal

Fur standing on end, or wet, or matted; runny eyes and nose; thin; wet rump; evidence of fighting, such as bite marks around eyes, ears or rump; diarrhea.

from dish and hoard it); overcrowded quarters; too hot a location.

Behavior

Unresponsive; animals fighting with each other.

Housing Conditions

Filthy cage; wet bedding and strong odor; lack of water and food (look under bedding, as all but guinea pigs may take food

Reporting Cruelty

Animal cruelty should be reported to the police department of the town in which the animal lives. Please leave your name and contact information so that a follow-up response may be made.

Additional Resources

Pet Mice

www.afrma.org/rmindex.htm

ASPCA

www.asPCA.org/pet-care/small-pet-care/mouse-care.aspx

American Fancy Rat and Mouse Association

www.afrma.org/rmindex.htm

For more information about animal cruelty, visit

www.humane.nh.gov

Be sure to view the **Interactive Presentation** on the **Welcome Page**.