

a care guide for your

# Fancy Mouse

(Mus musculus)



Congratulations on adopting a new mouse! Here is what you need to know and expect from your new furry family member.

## Behavior

Mice are social, busy little creatures. They are very curious and love to explore new areas. They enjoy chewing on things to keep their teeth from growing too long. Mice spend a lot of their time rearranging their habitat and furniture to create fun, cozy burrows and niches. Mice are nocturnal, so they sleep during the day and party all night; however, they do adjust to our schedules with ease. When properly socialized, they enjoy being held gently, with freedom to move about.

## Socialization

Becoming good friends with your new mouse is easy. Follow these simple steps to build trust and confidence:

- When you first bring your mouse home, give it 48 hours to adjust to its new home environment.
- During this 48-hour period, provide your mouse with food and water each day, but don't interact with your mouse. Remember that moving is stressful for people and animals.
- When your mouse has had a chance to settle in to his or her new surroundings, begin offering treats by hand through the cage.
- Once the mouse is taking treats through the cage, start placing treats in the palm of your open hand. Your mouse will have no choice but to associate you with great things! As you progress you can move treats further up your arm and extend handling times.
- Never hold your mouse tightly. Mice need to be held loosely and given freedom to move.



## The Basics



**LIFESPAN**  
1 1/2 to 3 years



**DIET**  
rodent food; veggie, fruit and grain supplements



**HABITAT**  
Sturdy enclosures with solid floors



**EXERCISE**  
running wheel, exercise ball



**CLIMATE**  
65°F-75°F



**TOYS**  
hard, dense items, such as wooden chew sticks

## Critter companions

Females tend to get along with other females and can live in colonies together. Males typically cannot be housed together.



## Lifespan

On average, mice live 1 1/2 to 3 years.

## Diet

A well-balanced mouse diet consists of 1-2 tablespoons of rodent food per day. Mice are scavengers—they store food in caches or bury it for later (like squirrels). Remove old food daily and replace it with a fresh meal. Fresh vegetables, fruit and grains are great supplements to daily pellet and mouse-diet formulas. Treats should not exceed 10 percent of their daily food intake.

Just like you, mice need access to fresh drinking water at all times. Hanging water bottles work very well and keep debris out.

## ⊘ Foods to avoid

Seeds are not recommended as food or treats.

Obesity in mice can lead to heart disease, diabetes and cancer, so don't give your mouse chocolate or foods high in sugar or fat.

## Habitat

Mice need sturdy habitats with solid floors, such as glass aquariums and wire-topped enclosures. These nonporous materials are great choices because they can be cleaned and sterilized easily.

A happy mouse has plenty of room to explore and exercise. Crowded mice suffer from stress, lethargy and shorter life expectancy. According to The Humane Society, "1-3 mice need a 10-gallon aquarium ... [or] ... Minimum 24 inches long by 12 inches wide [wire cage]."



Mice are fantastic climbers too, so multilevel cages allow them to explore their athletic ability. Provide approximately 2 inches of bedding so they can burrow and frolic. Paper-based bedding is ideal for mice because it is generally hypoallergenic with very little dust. Provide at least one hiding hut per mouse, so they can relax or hide and feel safe. Orchard grass, timothy hay, alfalfa hay, clean cotton cloth and shredded paper are great materials that mice use to make nests, so keep some on hand and watch your little mouse design one-of-a-kind luxury sleeping sanctuaries!

Mice love exercise, so provide a non-wire exercise wheel. Deep-clean the habitat once a week, spot-cleaning as needed between deep cleans.

## Temperature and humidity

Mice thrive in temperatures from 65–75 degrees F. Never house your mouse in a place directly impacted by a heater or climate control system (like a fan or air-conditioning unit). Mice are sensitive to noise and bright lights, so keep them in a calm part of your home, away from direct sunlight.

## Toys

Because their incisors grow continuously throughout their lives, mice need hard, dense, healthy things to chew. Wooden chew sticks, compressed green hay cubes and even wooden kitchen utensils are great solutions for mouse dental maintenance. Small cardboard boxes and toilet paper tubes make great disposable, chewable hideouts. Mice love to explore—consider a clear exercise ball for safe exercise around the house and out of the cage. Have fun with your mouse!

## Supplies needed

- Habitat: wire habitat or glass aquarium with wire mesh top
- Burrow/hideout
- Running wheel: solid surface, non-wire, 6-inch to 8-inch diameter
- Hanging drip water bottle
- Mouse diet: rodent lab blocks or commercial mouse diet
- Treats: fresh veggies/fruit, grains, commercial mouse treats
- Bedding: paper-based bedding
- Nesting material: shredded paper, hay, commercial mouse bedding
- Chew toys/enrichment: wood, compressed hay chew blocks, wooden kitchen utensils

## References

- The Humane Society of the United States ([www.humanesociety.org](http://www.humanesociety.org))
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ([www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk))



Seattle Animal Shelter

2061 15th Ave. W., Seattle, WA 98119

206-386-PETS (7387) [www.seattleanimalshelter.org](http://www.seattleanimalshelter.org)