

Caring for your **Rat**



life span 2-3 years

diet Rats are omnivores. The bulk of the diet should consist of a rodent block or a pellet containing a minimum of 16% crude protein and 4-5% fat.

Seed-based diets promote obesity and should be avoided. Longevity is increased by feeding a low fat, vegetable protein-based diet.

housing

- A wire cage with solid flooring works well. A large, multi-level cage designed for ferrets can also make a great rat home.
- Rats are social creatures, although females are more likely to fight with each other.
- Rats are primarily nocturnal, but they will have cycles of activity during the day and night. Avoid bright lighting with albino rats.
- Adult brown rats tolerate cold temperatures well when allowed to acclimate to them.
- Provide rats with items and materials for burrowing, climbing, and chewing.

restraint Rats are generally docile and are easy to handle. For manual restraint, grasp the rat over the back and place a thumb in the axilla (underarm) pushing a foreleg up towards the chin.

healthcare

- A rat's front teeth grow continuously, so they need objects on which to chew in order to keep them at a normal length.
- Call your veterinarian if you notice any of the following: sneezing, lethargy, weight loss, dull eyes, diarrhea or difficulty breathing.
- A red material called porphyrin can be seen in the nostrils of most rats. It is a completely normal substance!