

MOUSE CARE

The common pet mouse (*Mus musculus*) is a small rodent available in a variety of colours and types. They can make great pets due to their intelligence and social nature. They may be easily trained if handled well from an early age.



Longevity: Mice usually live between 1-3 years, if looked after correctly.

Sociability: Mice are sociable animals and are best kept in single sex groups or as a breeding pair. Male mice may show aggression towards each other when housed together, so housing two male mice together may lead to fighting. To avoid unwanted offspring, it is recommended to neuter mixed sex groups, males are easier to neuter than females.

Environment:

- Mice should be housed in a large plastic or wire enclosure which is easy to clean and well ventilated.
- Water bottles should be easily accessible and checked daily for blockages.
- The cage should be lined with absorbent bedding such as hay recycled paper products.
- There should be multiple shelters provided so the mice have somewhere to hide
- Mice are very active and inquisitive animals so within the cage, nest material, wheels, ropes and toys should be provided. However, be aware that toys will be quickly destroyed, so replaceable cardboard rolls and boxes often provide the best entertainment. It is best to avoid wooden toys, as they absorb moisture and can harbor bacteria.
- The cage should be cleaned out at least twice a week to help prevent disease as build up of urine can lead to health problems.
- Temperature – ensure that the tank is kept out of direct sunlight as these enclosures will easily overheat.



Diet:

- Mice are naturally omnivorous, eating whatever they can find in the wild.
- In captivity, they may be fed commercial rodent pellets (rather than muesli, to avoid selective eating) with additional fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Small portion of hay to be placed in the cage daily.
- 1 small handful of vegetables and some fruit daily (Remove from the cage if not eaten, before the fruit ferments).
- Beware overfeeding sugary “treats” as obesity and dental problems are commonly seen.
- Water should always be freely available via a drinking bottle and changed daily.

Environmental enrichment:

Environmental enrichment which is providing your pet with the opportunity to express normal behaviours is an important component of husbandry to enrich your pet’s life. Such behaviours as exploration, digging and burrowing or foraging for food can make for a healthier happier mouse. Search for environmental enrichment ideas online and see what you can create which will provide stimulation and exercise for your pet.

Preventative Healthcare

Preventative healthcare such as vaccinations and worming are not required

- Neutering may be recommended if keeping male and female mice together, to avoid unwanted pregnancy.
- Mice can have a litter every 3-4 weeks if kept entire. A female mouse can become pregnant within 24 hours of giving birth.

Common Health Complaints

Some particular types of mice are prone to skin problems

Trauma is seen occasionally so making sure your mice are exercising in a safe environment is essential

Mice are unfortunately prone to the development of mammary cancers

