

Common Breed



Fancy Rat:

Life span: 2 - 4 years

Size: 15 - 21cm, not including tail

The fancy rat is a domesticated brown rat, which is the most common type of pet rat. Fancy rats now come in a wide variety of colors and coat types. Pet rats are tamer than those in the wild. They are more comfortable around humans, have decreased reactions to light and sound, are less wary of new foods, and can better tolerate overcrowding.



Pet rats love having company and the more the better! A group of rats is called pack, swarm, horde or mischief. A single rat will have a hard time grooming himself so consider getting two!

Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new rat stay healthy and happy. Please ask one of our pet experts to help you choose these items.

Home

- ❖ Appropriate size and type of cage
- ❖ Aspen or other appropriate bedding
- ❖ Water bottle
- ❖ Food bowls
- ❖ Hiding house
- ❖ Solid surface exercise wheel
- ❖ Climbing toys

Food

- ❖ Fortified rat diet
- ❖ Appropriate fresh fruits and veggies
- ❖ Treat sticks and chews
- ❖ Mineral wheel

Extras

- ❖ Books and magazines
 - ❖ Vitamin drops
 - ❖ Nesting material
 - ❖ Exercise ball
 - ❖ Cage cleaner and disinfectant
- (Read and follow label instructions)



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RATS



Scientific name: *Rattus norvegicus*

For Ages: 8 & up, with adult supervision

Pet lifespan: Approximately 3 - 5 years

Pet Size: Approximately 15 - 21cm long, not including tail

Traits & Behavior

Social: Rats can be kept individually or in same-gender groups (to prevent breeding). When keeping male rats together, keep an eye on them as it's possible for them to become territorial and aggressive as they mature. Rats also enjoy human interaction.

Intelligent: Rats are the smartest of all small pets, and can learn their names and simple tricks.

Entertaining: Rats are calm, curious and fun-loving, they love to play and interact with their owners.

Clean: Rats are clean animals; you'll notice they groom themselves a lot when they're awake.

Things to remember

Lifting & Handling: It's very important to handle your rat gently. Let them become aware of your hand, then hold them gently yet firmly around the chest, and support their back feet with your other hand. Never pick your rat up by their tail.

Senses: Rats have limited vision, and rely on their keen senses of smell and hearing to perceive their world.

Special Needs: Rats have front teeth that never stop growing, so they need lots of healthy things to chew on like treat sticks.

Exercise: Your rat will run on a wheel in their habitat. To protect their tail, make sure it's a solid surface wheel.

Safety & Cleanliness: Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning their home.

Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at a greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

Nutrition

Staple diet: Choose a fortified diet appropriate for rats.

Vegetables: One tablespoon of chopped raw veggies like broccoli, kale, carrots or cooked sweet potatoes may be given daily. Take care not to overfeed these fresh foods. They have high moisture content and too much can cause diarrhea.

Fruits: Treat your rat to finely chopped pieces (about one tablespoon) of grapes, apple, banana or melon twice a week.

Treats sticks & chews: These hard and crunchy treats keep your rat's front teeth trimmed – always keep one in their habitat.

Water: Change and fill your rat's water bottle with clean water every day.

*Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to avoid spoilage. Treats should be less than 10% of total food intake.



Tip

Rats have been proven to make a laughter-like noise (unable to be heard by the human ear alone) when tickled and dream while sleeping.

Habitat

Housing: Your rat needs a well-ventilated wire home with a solid floor. It should be large enough for a food dish, water bottle, a hiding house and climbing toys. There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for them to move around freely.

Bedding: Line the cage floor with approximately 5 - 8cm of aspen or other appropriate bedding. Change it once a week or more often if needed.

Cage placement: Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight.

Health

Signs of a healthy rat:

- ❖ Clean, bright eyes
- ❖ Smooth coat
- ❖ Clean ears with no redness
- ❖ Eats and drinks normally
- ❖ Well-formed droppings with no diarrhea

Things to watch for:

- ❖ Overgrown front teeth
- ❖ Bare patches in the fur
- ❖ Hunched posture
- ❖ Weight loss; not eating or drinking normally
- ❖ Labored breathing; sneezing; discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth
- ❖ Diarrhea or discolored droppings for longer than two days