



# Rat Care



Rats make good family pets.

They are intelligent and interactive and they become tame when handled regularly.

Fancy rats are descendants of the brown rat, which originated from Asia.

Rats use their tails for balance.

Rats are social animals and it is strongly recommended that they are kept in single sex pairs or groups, this gives them the opportunity to interact.

It is best to introduce animals to live together when they are young.

The average life span is two and a half years.

## General care

Rats normally stay healthy throughout their lives.

They can suffer from sneezing and breathing problems. Ensure you are using good quality dust-free wood chips in your rat's cage.

If sneezing and breathing problems persist, contact your vet.

Rats can sometimes get mites in their fur, small animal sprays for mites are available from Boylans Garden and Pet.

Your rat's teeth constantly grow and are worn down from chewing. You can help him do this by providing him with a mineral block, wooden chews, and branches from bottle brush or other non-toxic plants.

Rats are intelligent, inquisitive and active therefore they should be provided with as much stimulation as possible. Buy a selection of toys and rotate them to avoid boredom.

Rats enjoy attention and are playful they like to explore their surroundings. If a rat is *really* enjoying itself it will do something called 'bruxing'. Their teeth start grinding or 'jittering', their eyelids quiver and their eyes 'boggle', don't worry if this happens, just think of it as purring like a cat! You can see rats doing it on YouTube.

## Checklist

- Rat cage with room to hang hammocks, tubes and ropes
- Good quality wood chips
- Rat food
- Feed bowl
- Mineral stone
- Vitamin drops
- Soft bedding
- Water bottle and bottle brush
- Pet safe disinfectant
- Wooden chew toys
- Tubes and toys for climbing and resting
- Rat house with soft bedding
- Book on rat care