

PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE

Common health problems in mice include:

- **Wet tail.** Symptoms of this bacterial infection include lethargy, diarrhea, loss of appetite, a ruffled coat or wetness around the tail. See a vet immediately. This infection can be fatal.
- **Parasites**, the most common being lice and mites. Symptoms include repeated scratching, hair loss and inflamed skin. See a veterinarian. Treatment may require a topical medication and/or injections.
- **Respiratory infections.** Symptoms include labored breathing, eye and nostril discharge, lethargy, reduced appetite and sneezing. See a vet immediately if this is the case. This infection can rapidly lead to death.
- **Lumps.** Monitor your mouse for unusual growths on the skin. These growths could be abscesses, benign cysts or cancerous tumors. See a vet. Treatment may require surgery or antibiotics.

Veterinary examinations every 6–12 months are recommended, as well as a routine check-up after adopting your mouse.

Visit a vet immediately if your mouse has any of the following symptoms: reduced appetite, diarrhea, no feces, drooling, bloating, lethargy, difficulty urinating, itchiness or hair loss.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more comprehensive information on mouse care, visit:

- thesprucepets.com
- petmd.com
- rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/pets/rodents/mice
- rmca.org

Area Vets

[Stahl Exotic Animal Veterinary Services](#)
4015 Rust Rd.
Fairfax, VA 22030
(703) 491-1111

[Pender Veterinary Clinic](#)
4001 Legato Rd.
Fairfax, VA 22033
(703) 654-3100

[Paws, Purrs & Exotics](#)
5838-A North Kings Highway
Alexandria, VA 22303
(703) 549-7297

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Animal Welfare League of Arlington

2650 Arlington Mill Dr.
Arlington, VA 22206

Phone: 703-931-9241
www.awla.org
mail@awla.org

CARING FOR MICE

A BASIC GUIDE TO HUSBANDRY AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTHCARE





DIET

Food

- A commercial rat/mouse pellet or rodent block diet, such as **Oxbow Essentials Adult Rat Food**, should be available for your mouse at all times and comprise the majority of the diet.
- Fruits (e.g. bananas, melons, apples without seeds), vegetables (e.g. broccoli, carrots, peas), grains, unsweetened cereal and timothy hay or orchard grass can be given as treats. These should not exceed 10% of the diet.
- Cooked egg, cooked beans, mealworms or lean meat can be given as sources of protein.

Do not feed mice “people food” or citrus fruits. Avoid commercial treat sticks and excessive amounts of seeds, as they are high in fat and low in protein.

Water

- Provide water in a commercially available water bottle. Change water daily.

HOUSING AND GENERAL CARE

Caging

- Cages should provide a minimum of 1 by 3 feet of space per mouse.
- A wire bar cage is optimal, but mice can be housed in aquariums as long as they are cleaned multiple times per week.
- Cage floors should be plastic or steel, not wire.

Environment

Mouse cages should contain:

- A hiding place, such as an upturned cardboard box, paper towel roll or commercially available plastic igloo.
- Safe materials, such as non-toxic cardboard, untreated wood or commercially available chew toys, to encourage natural chewing behavior and prevent dental disease.
- A commercially available running wheel. Vegetable oil or coconut oil can be used to lubricate the wheel’s moving parts.
- Unlimited access to water in a water bottle and mouse pellets in a bowl. Check water bottle daily to ensure that it is functioning and your mouse is drinking.

Mouse cages should not be placed in direct sunlight or in a drafty area. The optimal temperature for mouse housing is 72–80°F.

Bedding

- Mouse cages should be lined with a paper-based bedding such as Carefresh. Do not use wood shavings or cat litter.
- Be sure to provide enough bedding to allow your mouse to burrow or build its own nest.
- Bedding should be spot cleaned daily and changed weekly. Wash cage components thoroughly.

BEHAVIOR

- Mice are generally nocturnal, and are most active during the evening
- Mice use their whiskers to assess their surroundings. **Never** trim a mouse’s whiskers.
- Mice often groom themselves excessively when nervous, especially in a new or stressful environment.
- Mice are **social animals** and should ideally be kept in same-sex pairs or groups. Female mice can be introduced at any age, while male mice can typically only be housed together if introduced when very young. Monitor mice for fighting and separate if necessary.

Handling

- Pick up your mouse by cupping your hand under the mouse without squeezing its body.
- Avoid picking a mouse up by its tail. This may cause skin to detach from the bone of its tail.
- When allowing a mouse to explore outside its cage, be sure to do so in a closed-off area. Keep harmful products and dangerous objects out of reach.

