



Mice

Mus musculus

Amanda Zellar, DVM

Mice are often shy. They are usually social with other mice, but can be territorial. Many are very clever escape artists. They may bite when nervous or startled. Mice are nocturnal animals, meaning they are most active at night. They can start breeding at 50 days old, with babies born in about 3 weeks. Mother mice tend to be good parents. Litters usually have 10-12 babies that are weaned at 3-4 weeks old. Mice usually live about 2 years. Adult males should weigh 20-40g and females 25-40g.

Housing: Wire cages allow better air circulation, but be careful that your pet isn't chewing through or squeezing between bars. Watch out for escape artists! Be sure the cage base is solid or padded with enough bedding to prevent animals from standing on bare wire. Mice can usually get along well when housed together, just be sure to watch for aggression and separate them if they aren't getting along. Aquariums and plastic cages need to be cleaned more frequently than wire cages, which should be cleaned every four days. The cage should be lined with several inches of pelleted paper or shredded newspaper for burrowing. Wood shavings, can make any underlying respiratory conditions worse, because they tend to be dusty. Avoid cedar, walnut and pine shavings, as their strong smell and some oils contained in the wood can be irritating. Cardboard is a good chew toy for enrichment. Wood and other hard materials can damage the teeth if chewed too vigorously. Be careful not to put cloth, or anything that can get wrapped around legs, into the cage. A hidebox is important to relieve stress and provide a place for the nocturnal creatures to spend the day. The temperature should be kept at 65-75F. A water bottle (with no added vitamins!) should be provided fresh daily. Rodents can see blue, green and yellow, but not red. As a result, red transparent play tubes or hutches can allow you to get a good look at your pet while helping them feel a little safer.

Diet: Free choice commercial rodent pellets (protein of 20-27%), supplemented with fresh veggies, particularly leafy greens are best. Avoid: seed diets, sugary foods/treats, and cheese. Just because they like it does not mean it is healthy for them! Almonds in the shell make good occasional treats and chew toys.

More on the back!

Health care: Mice can be very good at hiding illness. We recommend exams every 6 months to make sure your pet is healthy. Weighing your pet at home can be a good way to catch illnesses early. Please bring them in to see us if their weight changes by more than 10%, as this may indicate they have a health condition that should be addressed. Dental problems, particularly overgrown teeth, are common. The sooner we see any disease, the easier it is to treat!

