



MOUSE CARE

BACKGROUND

Also known as: Domestic mouse (not to be confused with species you'd find in a field or attic)

Weight: ½ to 1 ounce

Length: 3 ½ inches, not including tail

Lifespan: 1 - 3 years

Cost per year: \$300

Good with kids: Great for families with children 5 & up, who can clean cage, measure food, etc. with adult supervision.

Fun Fact: Offer your pets some straw or shredded paper towels – your mouse may like to build nests!

FOOD

- Commercial rodent chow, either in block or pellet form, should be available to your pet at all times. You can find this at pet supply stores and feed stores—just be sure to select a formula that contains no more than 14% protein. You can also supplement a high-quality seed mix to provide greater variety in their diet.
- Fresh, clean water should be available 24/7 in a water bottle or water bowl that is cleaned regularly.
- Offer small, bite-sized bits of fresh fruits and veggies daily. Don't overdo it—mice have tiny tummies!

>> **Recommended:** peas, bananas, carrots, apples, broccoli, zucchini, cucumber

>> **Avoid:** cabbage, corn, candy, peanuts, uncooked beans, onions, and anything that's old or spoiled

CAGE & ENVIRONMENT

- Female mice are very social with members of their own kind, and females do especially well in a group. Males cannot be kept together as they will fight. Male and female mice cannot be kept together as they will breed.
- You can keep 1 to 4 mice in 20-gallon aquarium (minimum) with a wire cover, but it's always recommended to get the largest style you can afford.
- Wire cages made for hamsters are not recommended—the bars may be spaced too far apart. If you can stick your fingers through the bars, a young mouse could likely sneak out.
- Keep the cage indoors, away from drafts and extreme temperatures, in an environment maintained at 65 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Line the cage bottom with several inches of bedding (see Supply Checklist for recommendations). Do not use cedar or pine chips, which contain oils that are very dangerous to your mice.
- Your pets will need several hides for sleeping and hiding, such as houses and caves.
- Mice LOVE to climb and explore! Fill your enclosure with hammocks, tunnels, and hides so they can have a blast.

BEHAVIOR & HANDLING

- Did you know that you can tame your mice to sit in your hand or on your shoulder? Start by feeding them treats in the cage. When they're comfortable with that, gently pick them up. Talk softly to your mice to get them used to your voice. Gradually increase the length of these sessions.
- Mice are great jumpers, so be careful when you take yours out of the cage. Scoop them in your hand or in a paper cup to transport them. Never grab mice by the middle or end of the tail. If you need to catch a mouse quickly, grasp him at the base of the tail and lift him up as you cup him in your hand.
- Your pets are curious and charming, but remember, they're fragile, too. Children should always be supervised by an adult when handling mice.

EXERCISE & TOYS

- Keep your bright, active pets entertained! Provide cardboard tubes for your mice to chew and run through, and ladders and tree branches for climbing. PVC pipes make great tunnels.
- Mice love their exercise! They should have 1 or 2 solid bottom wheels that are at least 8 inches in diameter.
- Give your pets appropriate chew toys to help wear down their teeth, which grow continuously.
 - >> **Recommended:** twigs from trees that have not been sprayed with pesticides, small pieces of unpainted, untreated wood, safe chew toys from pet supply store

DAILY CARE

- Remove soiled bedding, droppings and stale/uneaten food daily. Clean and refill the water bottle every day.
- Clean cage completely once a week by replacing dirty bedding and wiping down the rest of the cage. Note that male mice tend to produce more odor than females, so their cages may need more frequent cleaning.

SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Bring your mice to the veterinarian annually for check-ups. Don't wait for your yearly appointment if you think one of your mice is sick—seek help immediately. Common signs that something isn't right include sneezing, coughing, chattering, excessive scratching, difficulty breathing, weight loss and lethargy.
- Mice are susceptible to external parasites such as lice. If you think your pets are infested, consult a veterinarian.





MOUSE SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- 20-gallon aquarium (minimum for 1-4 mice) with wire cover or plastic bin cage with at least 360 square inches of floor space
- Bedding, such as Carefresh and aspen
- Small boxes, huts or flower pots for hiding in
- Solid surface 8-inch wheel, 2 wheels for multiple mice
- Cardboard tubes (recycle from paper towel and toilet paper rolls)
- Rodent lab blocks and high-quality seed mix
- Attachable water bottle or water bowl
- Unpainted, untreated piece of wood or twig, or safe chew toys

