

Keeping Mice As Pets



Mice:

Domestic Mice bred in captivity make friendly pets and come in a wide variety of colours. If bred for showing, they are known as 'Fancy Mice'. They are easy to look after and should be kept in same sex pairs or groups to avoid unwanted offspring. They generally live for 1 to 2 years and are fully grown at around 3 months.



 Notes:

Duty of Care:

Every owner has a duty of care towards their animal. People should not take on the responsibility of keeping a pet unless they have the means to provide it with appropriate care and attention. This includes providing specialist treatment in the case of sickness or injury to prevent unnecessary suffering. Owners should arrange for their animal to be taken to a vet as soon as it becomes ill and be prepared to pay for any treatment themselves.

Housing

A simple wire cage with a plastic floor or a glass tank with a wire lid will make an ideal home for your pet Mice. Avoid wooden cages. Minimum cage size for a pair of Mice is 45cm x 30cm with at least 25cm depth, giving them plenty of room to stand upright. Remember Mice can squeeze through very tiny gaps, so make sure there are no spaces wider than your little finger otherwise your Mice could escape.

Your Mouse cage should be kept out of direct sunlight and away from draughts.

Shredded paper nesting material should be provided, along with dust-extracted wood shavings. Always provide a nest box filled with shredded tissue paper. The cage should be cleaned once a week - a small litter tray can be provided to encourage a hygienic environment, and always replace a little of the old bedding and nesting material for familiarity.

Feeding

A good quality commercial rodent mix makes an ideal core diet for your pet, but care should be taken not to overfeed as Mice can easily get fat. This can be supplemented with small pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables. Mice love sunflower seeds occasionally and also enjoy tiny amounts of carrot, apple, and broccoli. Contrary to myth, they don't need dairy products like cheese! Clean fresh drinking water should always be available from a gravity bottle.

Looking after your Mouse

Exercise & Entertainment:

Mice will enjoy playing with toys and they like cardboard tubes to run through and chew on. Like all rodents, their incisors grow continuously, so provide them with something to gnaw on – a mineral stone or wooden gnaw is ideal. By making a sound - such as a whistle – each time you feed your Mice, you will train them to associate the sound with food. Mice love to groom and play with each other.

Handling:

Mice are usually friendly and enjoy human contact but can occasionally be timid. If this is the case, place your hand in the cage whilst holding a treat (a few sunflower seeds). Your Mouse will become more confident once he gets used to accepting the treats. You can pick up a Mouse by gently holding the base of the tail, lifting the back carefully, and sliding your hand under its body.

Breeding:

Mice can breed extremely quickly from a young age, producing a litter of 8-10 babies every 3 to 4 weeks! You should therefore seek expert advice before considering keeping a breeding pair and only if you're certain you can find good homes for the babies.

Tips for a happy healthy Mouse

Community:

Mice naturally live in groups and need their own kind as company. Never try mixing Mice with other species of rodent such as rats – they will fight. Two or more Mice of the same sex, from the same litter, should get on well. Female Mice under 12 weeks can be mixed even if from different litters, but males should always be from the same litter. Male Mice emit a musky smell for marking their territory. It's not unpleasant, but some people prefer keeping female Mice for this reason.

Health:

Mice are generally healthy creatures but as with all pets, if you are worried about any aspect of their health, seek veterinary advice. Mice have a short lifespan so most health issues will be caused by the aging process. For a healthy life, your Mice need the following:

- A good balanced diet of rodent mix and small amounts of fresh food
- Clean dry housing, cleaned once a week with a mild disinfectant
- No extreme or sudden changes in temperature
- Water bottle and feed bowls cleaned daily
- Gnawing block or fruit tree branch to help wear their continually growing teeth
- Other Mice for company

