



## 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—like some mice, yours may like to build nests!

**WHERE TO GET A MOUSE:** There are many pet mice available for adoption at animal shelters and small-animal rescue groups. Call your local shelter and visit websites like [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) for mice in need of loving homes.

## 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 at least 16% protein and 18% fiber, and no more than 4% fat.
- Fresh, clean water should also be available to your mice 24/7. A water bottle with a drinking tube that attaches to the cage is the best way to go.
- 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, anything that's old or spoiled

## CAGE & ENVIRONMENT

- Mice are very social with members of their own kind, and females do especially well in a group. Males can be kept together if introduced at a young age and provided with adequate room; adult males will fight. Since mice breed quickly—and often—with large litters, keeping males and females together is not recommended.
- You can keep 1 to 4 mice in 10-gallon aquarium (minimum) with a wire cover, but it's always recommended to get the largest style you can afford.
- Plastic habitats—the kind designed for hamsters—also work well for mice, but you may need to put small branches in the tubes so mice can climb up and down. 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 a cave for sleeping and resting, such as a small flower pot or box.

## 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 exercise wheels! Get one with a solid surface without wire rungs, so your pets' tails cannot get caught while running.
- 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, dog biscuits, safe chew toys from pet supply store

## DAILY CARE

- Remove soiled bedding, droppings and stale/uneaten food from the cage 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.

IF YOU THINK THAT YOUR PET MAY HAVE INGESTED A POTENTIALLY POISONOUS SUBSTANCE, CALL THE ASPCA ANIMAL POISON CONTROL CENTER AT (888) 426-4435

A \$65 consultation fee may be applied to your credit card

## MOUSE SUPPLY CHECKLIST

- ✓ 10-gallon aquarium (minimum for 1-4 mice) with wire cover or plastic rodent habitat
- ✓ Cage bedding (aspen or hardwood shavings or processed paper products)
- ✓ Small boxes or flower pots
- ✓ Exercise wheel (solid, no rungs)
- ✓ Cardboard tubes (recycle from paper towel and toilet paper rolls)
- ✓ Rodent chow, block or pellet form
- ✓ Attachable water bottle with drinking tube
- ✓ Unpainted, untreated piece of wood or safe chew toy



The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®

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