

Caring for your Rat

beaphar[®]

Rats are highly intelligent and with regular handling can even be taught to do simple tricks, so can make ideal pets for older children. Although rats sleep a lot during the day they aren't fully nocturnal, and enjoy human company during the day and evening. Contrary to popular opinion rats are very clean animals, and with the correct care their enclosures can be virtually odourless. On average, rats live for between 2–2 ½ years.

FIVE WELFARE NEEDS

Being a responsible rat owner:

As an owner, it's your responsibility to provide your pet with the following so they live a fulfilled, happy and healthy life:



Companionship



Behaviour



Nutrition



Healthcare



Housing &
environment



Friends for life

Rats should be kept in same-sex pairs or small groups, and if not bought together need to be introduced at a young age to avoid fighting. Bonding with your rats is very important, and will help them get used to being gently handled and allow you to interact with them outside their cage.

You can begin taming your rats by putting your hand inside the cage and letting them sniff it. Once they're used to this, you can begin to gently stroke them. Then, you can slowly move on to picking them up and holding them. Never pick your rat up by its tail as this can cause serious damage; always use two hands and scoop them up.



Your rats' perfect home

Rats are very inquisitive and energetic, so need a lot of space and plenty of activities to keep them entertained. A large cage with different levels, including separate areas for exercise and play, nesting, and toileting, is ideal. Be sure the cage you buy is specifically for rats and not smaller rodents like hamsters, as these won't be big enough. Ask your pet retailer for advice if you're unsure.

The cage needs to be positioned away from radiators and windows. The base of the cage should be covered in paper-based bedding. Thoroughly clean and disinfect your rats home and replace the bedding once a week.



Your rats' behavioural needs

Your rats' home can be filled with hammocks, tunnels and toys to keep them entertained. Again, make sure the toys you buy are large enough for your rats. You can also encourage natural foraging behaviour and their inquisitive nature by hiding food around the cage for them to hunt for. Providing wooden toys for your pets to chew helps keep their teeth healthy.

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Feeding a healthy diet

Wild rats are scavengers, meaning they have a highly varied diet. In captivity, your rats' primary diet will consist of a commercial rat food. Pelleted food is recommended over muesli-style food; this helps prevent selective feeding and ensures your rats aren't missing out on vital nutrients. Make sure you feed your pets the correct amount of food for their age and weight to help avoid obesity.

Alongside this, you can feed your rats a small amount of fruit and vegetables, but these should be given in moderation. We recommend using ceramic food bowls, as these are heavier and less likely to be toppled over. Always keep fresh drinking water available.



Looking after your rats' health

Getting your rats used to being handled means you can give them a health check more easily. Regular health checks also mean you're more likely to spot if your rats are unwell. This is incredibly important for rats as, unfortunately, they are prone to tumours. If you spot anything that feels unusual, contact your vet immediately. You should also check their eyes, ears, nose and mouth, and watch out for any changes in behaviour, eating, drinking or toileting.

Rats may occasionally suffer with mites, which make them feel itchy and uncomfortable, but can usually be treated at home with the right products. They can also be prone to respiratory problems. This is often due to using the wrong substrate but could be a virus, so seek always veterinary advice if you're concerned.

Beaphar Anti-Parasite Spot On for rabbits, guinea-pigs, ferrets and rats

- Kills lice, fleas, mites and roundworms for up to 4 weeks
- Vet strength medicine



Rat Products



Beaphar Deep Clean Disinfectant for Small Animal Housing

- Long-lasting protection, kills bacteria and viruses
- Ideal for cages

Beaphar Cage Fresh Granules

- Contains friendly microbes that break down odours
- Ideal for cages and toilet areas

FIVE
MUST
HAVES



Beaphar CARE+® Rat

- Nutritionally balanced, pellet food
- With added vitamins and prebiotics

Beaphar Dental Easy Treat

- Supports the natural wearing of teeth
- With a high fibre content and added vitamins



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Use medicines responsibly (noah.co.uk)