

# Mouse Care Information

Small Angels Rescue • 301-668-0404 • [www.smallangelsrescue.org](http://www.smallangelsrescue.org)

Mice are playful and inquisitive animals. They live an average of two years. Mice have poor eyesight but good hearing and a good sense of smell. They are nocturnal. They prefer to sleep during the day, and they need attention and playtime in the evening. Mice are very social animals and need the companionship of their own species. It is unnatural for them to live alone. Mice should always be kept in at least same gender pairs. Mice enjoy grooming together, eating together, playing together, curling up to sleep together, and just being together. Female mice typically get along very well and tend to be easy to introduce to each other. Male mice sometimes get along very well, and sometimes they become aggressive with each other. If male mice become aggressive with each other, they must be separated and kept by themselves. Male mice also have a distinct scent that you should be OK with before you adopt them.

## HOUSING

There is no such thing as a habitat that is too big. Your mice will be spending a most of the time in the cage, so it should be as big as possible. It should be safe, roomy, comfortable and, interesting. Mice are well kept in an aquarium. It should be at least 24 inches long and 12 inches wide. It should have a secure, well-ventilated, coated wire, screen lid. It is better to have a long aquarium with more floor space than a tall aquarium with unused height. Mice can also be kept in wire cages. You must make sure the bars of the cage are spaced close enough together so that the mice cannot escape. They can escape some pretty small spaces! Levels in the cage should be solid, not wire. Animals should never be made to stand on wire. Standing on wire is extremely painful and will cause wounds, sores, foot deformities, and arthritis. Wire levels can be made safe by covering them with Magic Mats (available in pet stores), ceramic or vinyl tiles, cardboard (like cut cereal boxes) or other similar material. Crittertrails, Habitrails, and/or SAM houses are not recommended. They are poorly made, break easily, do not provide proper ventilation, are very difficult to clean, and harbor odor. Clean your mouse's habitat at least once a week.

## BEDDING

Use Carefresh Bedding. It is the safest and healthiest bedding choice for your mice. It is made from recycled wood pulp and is available at most pet stores. Aspen bedding is an acceptable second choice. Never use pine, cedar, sawdust, corn cob bedding, chlorophyll bedding, or cat litter. Pine and cedar shavings are poisonous to all animals! We have 50-liter bags of Carefresh bedding available for purchase at our adoption events for \$13.99 a bag plus tax.

## HIDEAWAY

Mice enjoy a cozy space for sleeping and relaxation. Provide a plastic igloo or other similar hideaway. If your mice chew excessively on their plastic igloo, remove it and provide a different type of hideaway. Wooden hideaways are not recommended for mice. They can be difficult to clean and can hold odor. Use unscented toilet paper or paper towels for nesting material. Do not use the commercial "fluff" from the store. It is unsafe. Commercial fluff can become wrapped around limbs and/or bind up in an animal's intestines if swallowed.

## WATER

Use an eight-ounce hanging water bottle that has an angled stainless steel sipper tube with a ball bearing in the spout. A glass water bottle is preferable, but a plastic water bottle is acceptable. Give your mice fresh water everyday. Filtered water is best.

## FOOD

Provide a ceramic food dish. Do not use plastic. It is important that mice have food available at all times. It is difficult to find a quality commercial mix made specifically for mice. We suggest Oxbow Regal Rat food or Innova Senior dog food. Supreme brand Reggie Rat food is an acceptable second choice. Oxbow is available from [www.oxbowhay.com](http://www.oxbowhay.com), [www.ferretstore.com](http://www.ferretstore.com), and a variety of other online retailers. Innova is available online. Oxbow and Innova are also available at some independent pet stores and veterinary practices, and through Small Angels Rescue. We usually have Supreme Reggie Rat food available for purchase for \$4.76 a bag plus tax and Oxbow Regal

Rat for \$9.19 a bag plus tax at our adoption events. Reggie Rat is also available at some pet stores and always available online at [www.petfooddirect.com](http://www.petfooddirect.com) and a variety of other online retailers. **Do not** use Kaytee, Hartz, L&M, or Nutriphase products. They contain a controversial antioxidant preservative called ethoxyquin that is linked to cancer, organ damage, birth defects, and other serious health problems. Mice enjoy a variety of fresh vegetables everyday. Mice often enjoy, among other things, asparagus, avocado, basil, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumber, green pepper, okra, parsley, peas, red pepper, spinach, and squash. Fresh fruit can be used as a treat. Mice often enjoy, among other things, apples, bananas, blueberries, cherries (pitted), cranberries, grapes, kiwi, melon, peaches, pears, and strawberries. Mice may also enjoy, in small quantities, whole oats, spray millet, cooked brown rice, cooked pasta, whole wheat bread, pumpkin seeds, flax seeds, tofu, and hardboiled or scrambled egg. Use common sense when feeding your mice, and introduce new foods slowly. Avoid iceberg lettuce, dried corn, raw beans, potato eyes, green potato, green parts of tomatoes, garlic, chocolate, processed foods, and sugary or salty foods. Do not give your mice a mineral or salt wheel. They are not necessary or healthy. Mineral and salt wheels are made with glue, and salt wheels are bleached. You can give your mice natural wood chews that have not been artificially colored and/or dried apple branches from apple trees that have not been sprayed with pesticides.

### **EXERCISE and PLAY**

Mice need and enjoy an exercise wheel. If you have multiple mice, you should consider providing multiple wheels. The exercise wheel should provide a solid running surface. Never use an exercise wheel with metal or plastic bars/rungs. Their feet, legs, and/or tail can slip between the rungs, get caught, and break. We recommend Wodent Wheels, Comfort Wheels, or Silent Spinners for mice. All of the wheels are available online, and Comfort Wheels and Silent Spinners can be found in most pet stores. Mice need time out of their habitat everyday. You can use a large Rubbermaid tub as a playpen. Another good playpen is the Grrreat Wall, which can be ordered online. Mice can easily get out of fence-type playpens. Mice are very playful and inquisitive, and busy mice are happy mice. They like to climb, hide, jump, and explore. Mice enjoy tubes, tunnels, boxes, bridges, ladders, ropes, bird toys, and objects to climb in, on, over, under, and through. NEVER put your mice in an exercise ball. Exercise balls are dangerous and stressful for all animals.

### **HANDLING**

Before you pick your mice up, make sure you have clean hands that do not smell like food. Make sure your mice are fully awake and aware of your presence. Scoop your mice up gently using both hands, a cup, or a cardboard tube. NEVER pick your mice up by the tail, not even the base of the tail. The tail can break off or the skin can rip, leaving exposed bone.

### **Interested in mice?**

Please email [mice@smallangelsrescue.org](mailto:mice@smallangelsrescue.org) or call 301-668-0404. You can see our adoptable animals online at [www.smallangels.petfinder.com](http://www.smallangels.petfinder.com).