



## FACT SHEET - RATS

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Intelligent and fun to watch. With regular handling, rats enjoy the company of humans and they are clean and easy to care for. They are great escape artists - given the opportunity.

### Rats Need

- Companionship of other rats and to spend time with people
- A large cage or glass tank, ideally with two levels at least 75x65x30cm for two rats
- A daily balanced diet of seeds, grains, nuts, fruit and vegetables and a mineral lick
- A constant supply of fresh water from a water bottle
- A piece of hard wood to gnaw on
- A layer of peat or woodshavings for the floor of the cage, kept clean with any uneaten food removed daily
- Shredded plain paper for bedding with hiding places and a nest box for sleeping
- Toys to make life interesting and to provide plenty of exercise
- To be kept indoors away from direct sunlight
- Regular handling



### Rats Health

- Diarrhoea can be caused by poor quality food and poor hygiene in the cage. Renew all bedding with fresh clean bedding. Remove all traces of old food. If the diarrhoea continues, seek veterinary advice
- Wood, bones or nuts for the rat to gnaw on to help prevent overgrown teeth. Check regularly
- Parasites - treatment is available from your veterinary practice
- If a rat develops breathing difficulties or nasal discharge, seek veterinary advice immediately
- Any lumps or bumps found, especially on older rats, should be checked out by your vet

### Rat Facts

- Average lifespan is 2 - 3 years
- Females come into season on average every 4 - 6 days
- Gestation is 20 - 22 days
- Average litter size is 3 - 4 weeks

This is intended as a quick guide only. Further information should be obtained before embarking on keeping this type of pet.