

Rat Diet

Rats are omnivores which means they eat both plant and animal material. Clean, fresh water should always be available. Food should be given in open ceramic dishes which allows them to carry, handle, and eat their food wherever they want. Rats should be fed twice daily: once in the morning and again in the evening. Uneaten food should be removed before offering fresh food. Rats feed mainly at dawn and dusk and drink mostly at night. Multiple water bowls should be made available so rats can drink simultaneously.

Pellets

Be sure to provide pellet food that is made specifically for rats. Feeding food designed for other small animals will not meet the nutritional needs of rats. Avoid feeding them a seed or grain mix as these are too high in fat and sugar. Rats are very prone to becoming obese and malnourished on these mixes. They tend to select their favorite in the mix and therefore miss out on important nutrients.

Fruits & Vegetables

It is important to provide occasional variety in your rat's diet. Rats are intelligent animals and providing a variety of different foods can help to enrich their lives. Any new foods and changes to their diet should be made gradually to avoid gastrointestinal upsets. Introduce new food to rats as a group so individuals don't smell different, preventing aggression. Rats should be fed a combination of fresh fruits and vegetables in addition to pellet food. See the list provided for safe veggies and fruits you can offer your rat and which ones should be avoided.

Treats

Treats like cooked pasta, unsweetened breakfast cereal, and pieces of bread can be offered occasionally and in very small amounts. You can also purchase commercial treats.

Foraging

Natural foraging behaviors, such as handling and manipulating food, are encouraged. Scattering portions of their daily food around the habitat will encourage foraging behavior.



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Coprophagic Behavior

Rats are coprophagic rodents. This means that they eat their feces to enable them to absorb essential nutrients such as vitamin B12 and folic acid. They will eat fecal pellets from the floor of their habitat. It is a natural behavior they need to perform to stay healthy. Stopping this could cause nutritional deficiencies and health problems.

Safe to feed

- Apples (no seeds)
- Bananas
- Basil
- Bok Choy
- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Chicory
- Coriander
- Courgette
- Cress
- Cucumber
- Endive
- Melon
- Parsley
- Peach
- Pears
- Peas
- Sage
- Sweet Peppers
- Zucchini

Avoid Feeding

- Cabbage
- Candy
- Chocolate
- Corn
- Grapes
- Grapefruits
- Junk Food
- Lemons
- Onions
- Oranges
- Raisins
- Rhubarb
- Uncooked Beans
- Walnuts

