

Rat Health

Monitoring Behavior

Rat owners should observe their pet closely for signs of stress, pain, illness, and injury. Rats don't outwardly show signs of ailments so it is important to watch for small behavioral changes that can indicate something is wrong. Chromodacryorrhoea, or red staining around the eyes or nose, indicates stress, possibly from illness, social, or environmental problems. Stressed rats are more likely to become ill.

Appropriate Environment

A rat's environment is very important. If they are prevented from behaving naturally, more health concerns may arise. Be sure they are provided plenty of space, enrichment, and hiding places so they can avoid one another. Because rats spend a lot of time grooming, bald patches caused by over-grooming, called barbering, may indicate they are bored. Obesity could become a concern without enough space provided for activity and enrichment for exercise. Suitable gnawing materials will need to be provided to prevent teeth from overgrowing. Rats teeth grow continuously throughout their life; gnawing and chewing helps wear them down.

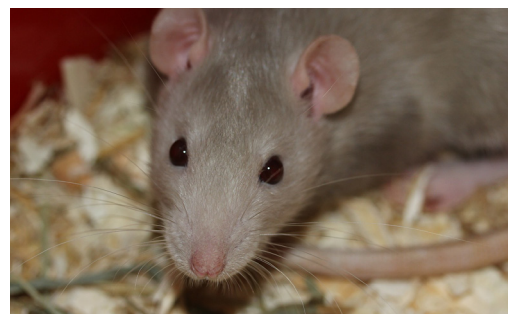
Regular Health Checks

Once you have adopted a pet rat, it is your responsibility to make sure that they're looked after, especially when they are sick. Regular health checks are important to ensure your rat is happy and healthy. Ask the veterinarian to check that your rat's teeth are growing correctly. Each veterinarian may have a different recommendation for vaccinations, deworming, and neutering. Neutering is recommended if males and females are kept together to avoid unwanted pups. It is important to transport them carefully to their vet visits, reducing stress wherever possible. Avoid transporting them unless necessary.

Monitoring Health

As you learn more about your new rat friend, you will learn what is normal for them and what is not. There are some signs that are worth looking out for. If you notice any of these changes in your rat then you should seek advice from a veterinarian immediately:

- Loss of appetite
- Smaller poop pellets or none at all
- Sitting still with no movement at all
- Eyes not bright and alert when awake
- Unknown discharge around the nose or eyes
- Aggression when not normally aggressive
- Bald patches
- Damp tail area
- Change in movements
- Change in breathing
- Change in posture such as hunching
- Limb chewing



20950 Enterprise Avenue | Brookfield, WI 53045
262-782-9261
ebhs.org