



# Exotic Animal Hospital

of Philadelphia

## Care of mice

You got a new mouse? Congratulations!

Please refer to this handout in helping you set your new mouse up for success as most of the diseases and emergency presentations to the veterinary hospital stem from improper husbandry and could be avoided.

### Did you know?

- Mice are good-natured, inquisitive creatures that make great pets.
- The most common pet mouse is the standard white laboratory mouse (*Mus musculus*) however different varieties are now entering the pet trade.
- Pet mice also come in many different colors and hair coats including satin, spotted and even longhaired.
- The average lifespan of most pet mice is 1-2 years.
- Mice are mainly nocturnal becoming more active in the evenings and during the night.
- Females or mixed sex pairs do well together, however if keeping mixed sex pairs it is recommended to have the male neutered as they are prolific breeders.



### Enclosure:

- Provide the largest cage possible for your pet mouse.
- Rodents are notorious chewers so cages of stainless steel, durable plastic, or wire are recommended.
  - Avoid caging constructed from wood or soft metal.
- A cage should have a solid plastic base with closely spaced metal bars for both containment and ventilation purposes. Avoid chain-link or mesh types of flooring as mice can easily injure their feet.
  - Aquariums are inappropriate due to poor ventilation
- Provide enrichment in the form of tunnels, exercise wheels, and nest boxes to maintain the mental well being of your pet. Old paper towels or toilet paper tubes and wood gnaws can be used as toys and give your pet something constructive to chew on.

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- Provide ample nesting material and deep bedding for burrowing, resting, and to soak up urine. Select clean, absorbent, non-toxic, and odor free bedding. Recycled paper products (i.e. CareFRESH, Absorption Corp) are preferred.
  - **AVOID** wood shavings, sawdust and corncob bedding as they can cause respiratory irritation and intestinal obstructions
- Also provide shredded paper towels or tissue as nesting material.
  - **Avoid** the commercially available fluffy cotton wool products as these materials are indigestible and can lead to intestinal obstruction if eaten.
- Provide tunnels, exercise wheels, and nest boxes to help maintain the mental well-being of your pet. Offer cardboard tube rolls and wood blocks as chew toys.
- Optimal temperature range for rodents falls between 65-78°F, with a relative humidity of 40-70%.
  - Keep the cage out of direct sunlight and away from other heat sources, such as a radiator, or drafts.
- Clean the cage and all cage furniture thoroughly once or twice weekly. Changing the bedding and disinfect all areas of the habitat. Clean food dishes and the water bottle. Plastic and glass housing structures reduce ventilation, and can lead to problems with temperature and odor control, so more frequent cleaning may be necessary.

**Diet:**

- Offer a rodent ration containing 12-16% protein and 4-6% fat, either in pellet or block form.
  - **Avoid** commercially available seed-based diets as they predispose your mouse to obesity and nutritional deficiencies.
- Supplement the diet with small amounts of fresh fruit (i.e. apples, bananas, and grapes), raw vegetables, and freshly washed, salad greens. Dandelion leaves are often a favorite treat of mice.
  - Other occasional treats may include low sugar cereals (i.e. Cheerios®, General Mills; puffed wheat, rice, or millet cereals, or spoon-size shredded wheat), plain popcorn, dry oatmeal, cooked pasta, or whole- wheat bread.
  - **Avoid** cheese as it is high in fat and rodents cannot tolerate large amounts of lactose. Provide water in a water bottle.
- Position the sipper tube low enough to allow the pet easy access. Although mice drink only a fraction of the total bottle volume, the bottle should be emptied, cleaned and refilled with fresh water daily.

It was a pleasure working with your pet today, please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns



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