

To ensure the mouse is healthy and not experiencing pain, daily visual health checks should be carried out.

#### Nose

- ✓ Dry
- ✗ Blood or discharge
- ✗ Sneezing or wheezing

#### Eyes

- ✓ Open and close freely
- ✓ Clear, bright
- ✗ Discharge
- ✗ Unable to open & close freely
- ✗ Cloudy

#### Ears

- ✓ Responds to sound
- ✓ Clear
- ✗ Blood or discharge
- ✗ Smelly
- ✗ Excess wax
- ✗ Visible mites

#### Mouth

- ✓ Eating well
- ✓ Aligned teeth
- ✓ Pink gums
- ✗ Dropping food/dribbling
- ✗ Reluctant to eat
- ✗ Overgrown teeth
- ✗ Pale gums



#### Legs, feet, claws

- ✓ Move freely
- ✓ Nails not curled over
- ✗ Overgrown claws
- ✗ Reluctant to move/ weight bear

#### Body/Skin

- ✓ Smooth, glossy coat
- ✓ Complete coat
- ✗ Dull coat
- ✗ Bald patches
- ✗ Red/broken skin
- ✗ Scratching

#### Anogenital area

- ✓ Clean and clear
- ✓ Evidence of regular faeces production
- ✗ Blood or discharge
- ✗ Sticky faeces/ matted fur
- ✗ Smelly
- ✗ Swelling



Pet Industry Federation  
[www.petfederation.co.uk](http://www.petfederation.co.uk)  
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[www.mypetpeople.co.uk](http://www.mypetpeople.co.uk) is the website directory of PIF member businesses for pet owners looking for outstanding services for their pet

# Looking after your Mouse



## Facts

Mice live for two - three years

Mice are social and should be kept in same sex pairs

Mice are nocturnal, so will be most active at night

Fancy mice and spiny mice are common species of pet mouse

To ensure all pet animals are well cared for, the Animal Welfare Act 2006 was introduced.

This law states that all animal owners have a legal duty of care to meet their animal's five welfare needs.

The five welfare needs are:

- The need for a suitable environment
- The need for a suitable diet
- The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns
- The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals
- The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.



## The need for a suitable environment

Providing the mouse with safe, suitable accommodation which is clean, comfortable, secure and has appropriate environmental conditions, including temperature, ventilation and drainage.

A large cage with a deep plastic base is ideal for mice. Some mice are very small and agile, so the bars of the cage should be less than 9mm apart to prevent escape.

The cage should contain a suitable floor covering (substrate) such as dust free wood shavings or chopped straw. Nesting material should be provided in one corner of the cage, this can be inside a small house or cardboard box.

Fresh water should be constantly available, a water bottle is recommended as the water in bowls can become easily contaminated.

Mice are susceptible to changes in temperature and the accommodation should be kept constant, between 17oC and 23oC. If the temperature rises above 30oC a mouse may suffer from heat stroke.

Mice urinate very frequently. The accommodation should be cleaned out twice a week to prevent the buildup of ammonia and bacteria. Animal safe disinfectants should be used.

## The need for a suitable diet

Like most rodents, mice are omnivores and can eat a variety of foods, but the introduction of new foods should be gradual to prevent digestive upset.

A variety of specialist mouse diets are available containing seeds, grains, nuts and commercially manufactured biscuits, these have been manufactured to provide mice with a nutritionally balanced diet.

Mice require no more than a teaspoon of food each day. The diet can also be supplemented by very small amounts fruit or vegetables and the occasional dog biscuit.

Cheese is not recommended as a regular food source, although small amounts can be provided as occasional treats.

Fresh water must always be available.



## The need to be able to exhibit normal behaviour patterns

Mice are nocturnal so are more active at night. Mice are naturally active animals and should be provided with enrichment and exercise wheels to prevent obesity and boredom.

Card board tubes make ideal enrichment for the mouse to play in, climb in and gnaw.

Mice will often climb the inside of the cage so care must be taken to ensure all doors are securely closed.

## The need to be housed with, or apart from, other animals

Mice are social animals and should be housed in single sexed pairs or groups to prevent unwanted offspring. As mice can breed from two months it is essential youngsters are sexed and separated early.

## The need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease

By providing a suitable diet and clean accommodation the mouse will be less likely to develop some diseases and disorders.

To ensure mouse do not experience pain when being handled they should be handled correctly. Fancy mice can be picked up by cupping them or by the base of their tail, picking them up by any other part of the tail will cause discomfort and injury.

Spiny mice must not be picked up by the tail.

Should the mouse become ill providing suitable care and where necessary veterinary treatment is essential. Some common mouse conditions are:

- **Respiratory diseases** – symptoms include coughing, sneezing, and discharge from the eyes and nose.
- **Lumps and growths** – there are a number of causes including abscesses, fatty lumps and tumors.