



Pet Rat
BASICS

OHLONE HUMANE SOCIETY

RAT ESSENTIALS



Water bottle



Toys



Bed or hammock



Healthy Food



Veterinarians



Family to love



Wire cage



Soft paper litter or bedding

READING RAT Body Language



I AM HAPPY

Ears and head up

Ears wide and pink

Body relaxed

I AM CURIOUS

Body stretched forward

Whiskers twitching

Ears turned forward



I AM ANGRY/SCARED

Ears back. Freezes.

Trembling, eyes wide, tail stiff

Hair on back standing up



PET RATS: ONE BREED, MANY VARIETIES

- Although wild rat breeds number over 60, all pet rats come from one breed, *Rattus norvegicus*. The many colors and coat types are considered one of seven varieties of the one breed.
- The seven varieties of pet rats include Standard, Hairless, Tailless, Rex, Satin, Dumbo, and Bristle Coat. Then there are 40 different combinations of patterns of eyes and coat colors.
- Rats are very social and like to live with other rats. For that reason, pet rat owners often get their rats neutered by the veterinarian or only keep same-gender rats. Sometimes, though two unneutered male rats may fight.
- Rats like to sleep during the day and play at night. If awakened during the day for a child to play with him, the rat may be grumpy and may even nip when startled. Evening may be a better time to play with your pet rat.
- Rats need choice and are naturally cautious, so never force them to do anything. They want to explore new areas at their own pace. If they mark or leave droppings when they're in a new place, it means they're frightened or distressed. If this happens, return them to their usual cage. Each rat may behave differently.
- Rats are clever, curious, have excellent memories, and learn quickly. They need mental stimulation to stop them getting bored, so training them can be fun for both of you. However, always use rewards or telling them they did well to encourage training.
- Rats have sensitive whiskers to maintain their balance and guide them around objects, so never clip their whiskers.



ENRICHMENT

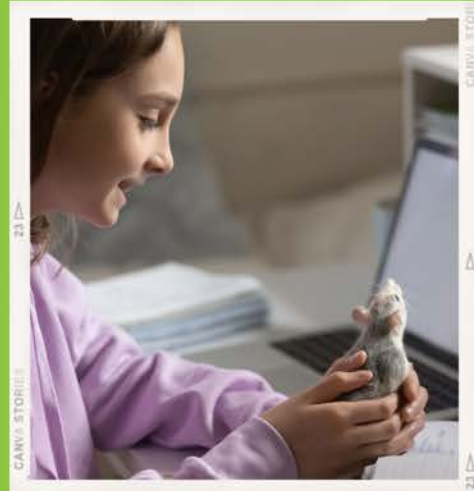
RATS enjoy toys and stimulation



Digging and burying food in litter



Burrowing in paper bags, baskets, bowls



Exercising out of their cage



Climbing, and finding new spaces



Chewing to keep their teeth short



Playing at night and sleeping during the day



Having friends



What foods are good and bad for rats?

Rat/ mouse pellets, fresh water in a special bottle with a drinking tube. Supplement with high fiber, low fat.



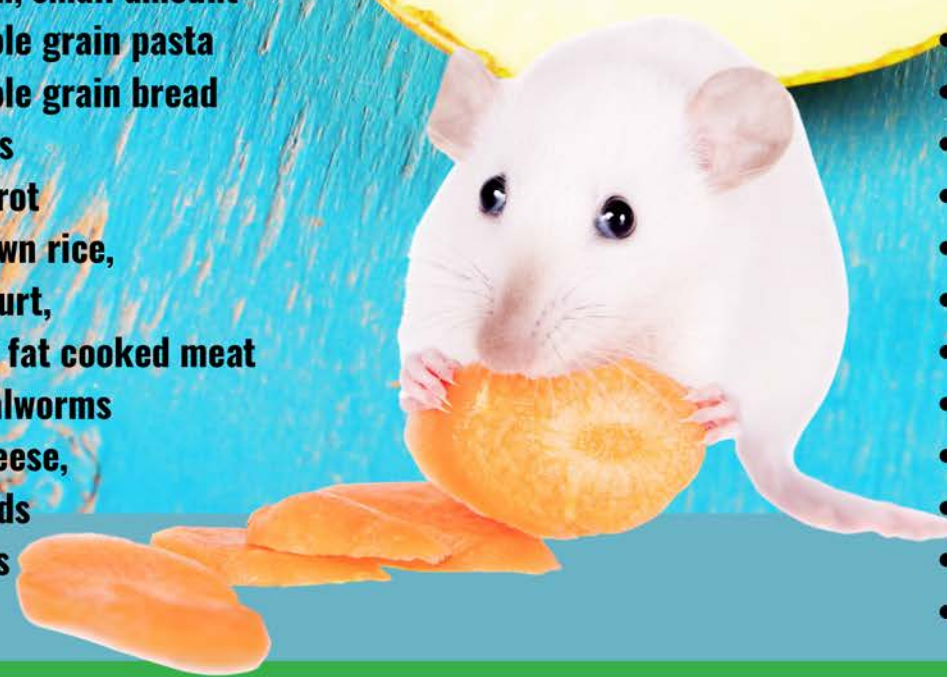
GOOD FOOD FOR RATS

- Apples, no seeds
- Pears
- Bananas
- Melons
- Fruit with pits
- Citrus fruits
- Broccoli
- Cabbage (not red)
- Endive
- Carrots
- Bok choy
- Celery
- Parsley
- Corn, small amount
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain bread
- Peas
- Carrot
- Brown rice,
- Yogurt,
- Low fat cooked meat
- Mealworms
- Cheese,
- Seeds
- Nuts



BAD FOOD FOR RATS

- Candy
- Chocolate
- Junk food
- Blue cheese
- Green bananas
- Green potato skin
- Licorice
- Orange juice
- Mango
- Raw artichokes
- Raw dry beans
- Peanuts
- Raw red cabbage
- Brussel sprouts
- Raw sweet potato
- Avocado
- Rhubarb
- Sticky peanut butter
- Dried fruits
- Seaweed



RULES FOR MEETING PET RATS!

IF YOU MEET A PET RAT...

- Ask an adult if you can pet the rat.
- Next ask the actual owner of the pet rat if you may pet or hold him.
- Let the owner pick up the pet rat out of their cage, and do not try and put your hands into the cage unless told to do so.
- Rats are very fast, so make sure you know how to hold it safely before you try. Support the rat with one hand under the rat's bottom and the other over the rat's back. Keep the pet rat close to the ground in case it jumps out of your hands. Do not squeeze the rat to keep from running or getting loose.
- Ask the rat's owner what the rat enjoys best, Keep your fingers away from the rat's mouth. They have sharp little teeth.



BE KIND!



RATS CAN HAVE OVER 40 COLOR COMBINATIONS: WHITE, BLACK, BROWN, GRAY, OR ANY OF THOSE MIXED. Color the rat with your favorite colors!

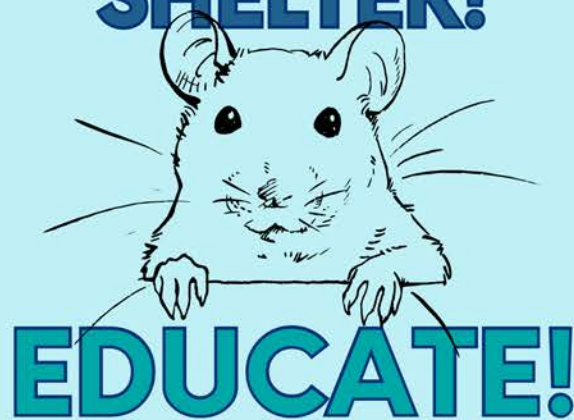
Ask your veterinarian about neutering your rat



ADOPT US!



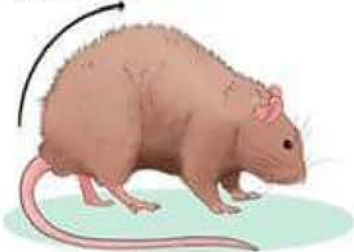
ADOPT A RAT FROM A RESCUE OR SHELTER!



READING RAT Body Language and Sounds

RAT BODY LANGUAGE

Standing on toes, fur puffed out



Aggressive



Seems legless



Pancake



Cautious



Relaxed



In pain

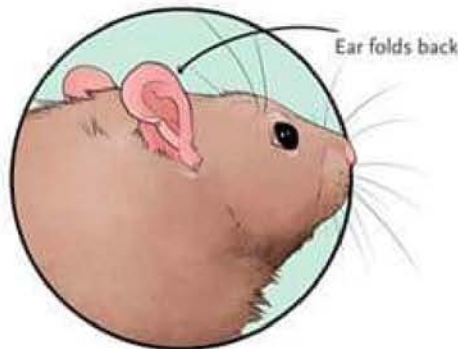


Sick

Stretching forward, turning ears and whiskers to object of interest

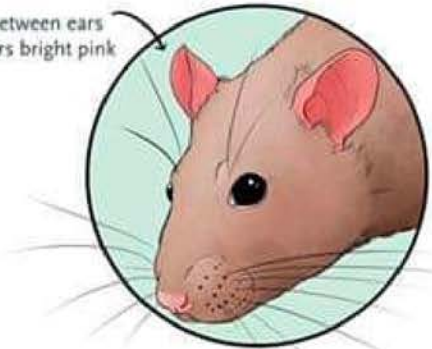


Curious

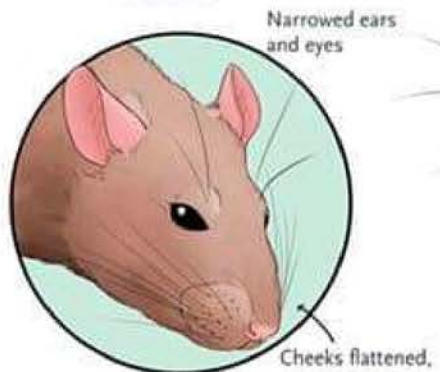


Scared

Distance between ears widens, ears bright pink



Happy



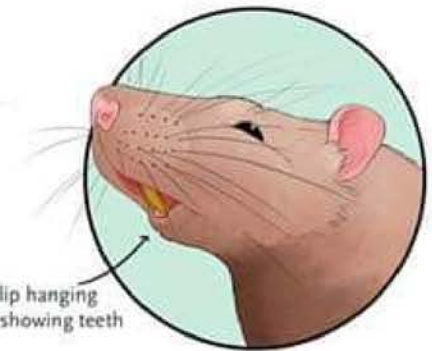
In pain

Narrowed ears and eyes



Neutral

Lower lip hanging down, showing teeth



Sleepy

Cheeks flattened, nose elongated, whiskers bunched