

Petware House

Your Neighborhood Pet Store

Mouse

Mus musculus



CARE SHEET

Mice come in a variety of colors with an assortment of markings. Mice are social, Alert, adaptable and extremely active rodents that have become a popular companion animal for many people.

Average Size The average size of a mouse is 3 inches in length. **Life span** Up to 3 years.

Feeding Fresh food and water should always be available. Small amounts of vegetables and fruits can be given daily, such as pears, grapes, strawberries, dates, raisins, sprouts and carrots. Vegetable and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be thrown away.

Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Do not feed chocolate, alcohol or caffeine; these are dangerous.

Housing Mice acclimate well to average household temperatures; be cautious of extreme temperature change; habitat should never be in direct sunlight or in a drafty area. Habitat should be glass, plastic or metal, escape proof and with a solid bottom. A 10 gallon aquarium makes a good home for two mice. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.

Different types of small animals should not be housed together.

Maintenance Remove wet spots daily; change bedding weekly or more often if needed and wash all items in the habitat. Clean the habitat once a week by scrubbing it with mild soap and water, rinse and allow to completely dry to minimize fumes before placing mice back into the habitat.

Temps Stable room temperature is adequate. No special requirements.

Humidity No special requirements

Lighting Mice are nocturnal, keep out of direct sunlight. Use room lighting as needed.

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WATER & ACCESSORIES

Mice should be given a sipper bottle, hung from the side of the cage. They also need small toys to play with and a running wheel for exercise. Keep a food bowl; chew stick and nesting house as well.

BASIC REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION

Mice can start reproducing at an early age. Both sexes can start breeding at 6 weeks of age and continue until they are about 12 months old. A female's first litter often produces a smaller number of babies, as do those from female over 9 months of age. Breeding mice is an easy business as long as you remember one simple rule. That is **ONLY ONE MALE TO A CAGE**. Multiple males will fight and can kill each other. Multiple males cause damage to females and often kill the babies that are produced. Having multiple males also results in the males producing more scent.

If you have a single male and a few females, in a cage, they should produce babies every 18 - 28 days. Producing large number of mice is best done with the harem method. (One male to several females). I have found that 2 to 4 females to one male in a standard mouse cage works fine. How many young they produce depends on their environment and breed of mice. Most "pet shop" mice produce small litters of about 3 to 12 babies. There are some laboratory breeds of mice that produce litters of up to 25 babies every 28 days. However these laboratory mice can be very difficult to obtain.

To get constant production it is best to have several cages of mice at peak breeding age. (about 3 to 9 months of age). One way to do this is to date every cage that you set up. (Each cage should only contain animals of the same age) As mice are weaned at 5 or 6 weeks of age I use these mice when setting up new cages. You can set up a new cage, or group of cages, every month. Once a cage is established **never** introduce new mice to it. The established group will attack and may kill the new "intruder". If you established a new cage every 4 weeks you would need 9 cages and have the following results.

Cage 1 approximate age of mice 6 weeks

Cage 2 approximate age of mice 10 weeks (first small litters born)

Cage 3 approximate age of mice 14 weeks (start of best production)

Cage 4 approximate age of mice 16 weeks (Good production at this time)

Cage 5 approximate age of mice 20 weeks (Good production at this time)

Cage 6 approximate age of mice 24 weeks (Good production at this time)

Cage 7 approximate age of mice 28 weeks (Good production at this time)

Cage 8 approximate age of mice 32 weeks (Good production at this time)

Cage 9 approximate age of mice 36 weeks (production of babies starts to drop)

Cage 10 approximate age of mice 40 weeks (Remove all mice from this cage and use cage to start new breeding group, This cage becomes cage 1 again).

Cage 1 is set up using young weaned mice from cages 5, 6 or 7. In this way you set up new cages using weaned mice produced by adult mice that are in their peak.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Mice are active during the night and sleep during the day (nocturnal). They are easy to handle once trust is established between you and your mice; they may become irritable and nip if suddenly awakened from a nap or startled.

Mice chew on objects to maintain the incisor teeth, which grow continuously. Use cheek pouches to transfer food from one location to another.

Grooming: Mice stay clean and do not need baths. They can be spot cleaned with a damp washcloth or un-scented baby wipes.

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