

## ----- Feeding

Mice eat just about anything. Lab Blocks or Animal Pellets are a complete mouse feed. These are about 1/4 inch long hard extruded greenish feed pellets. Mice tend to obesity. Their food intake needs to be monitored. Homemade diets can be blended using grains, rice, oats, seeds (such as peanut, sunflower, pumpkin), high quality dog food, as well as a number of other ingredients. Small amounts of vegetables, fruit (fresh or dried), meal worms, crickets, dried corn on the cob or low fat whole wheat bread are good as treats. Avoid feeding too many nuts or other high protein items, not more than about %5 of the diet if possible due to the high fat content. These foods may help mice with specific problems: banana, garlic, prunes/plums, tea, eggplant, onion, raspberries, yellow mustard cranberries, prunes/plums, strawberries, clove, ginger, dates. Avoid: chocolate, licorice, raw beans, carbonated drinks (mice can't burp) raw sweet potato, bleu cheese -the mold is toxic to some mice, raw red cabbage, raw brussel sprouts, raw artichokes, orange juice, green bananas, green potato skin, rhubarb. Good treats: Strawberries, Grapes, Watermelon, Apple, Carrots, Peanuts (In the shell is fun!)

**Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes behavior or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.**

**As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.**



## check-list ✓

### *Your pet Fancy Mouse requires...*

- Aquarium or Cage of appropriate size & wire gauge
- Water bottle(best), dish or bowl
- Substrate or bedding material (Aspen shavings)
- Litter Box (optional)
- Cave/Den/Hiding spot
- Toys/tunnels/swings (for climbing & exercise)
- Excercise Wheel (their exercise & your entertainment)
- Food dish for mouse pellets or blocks
- Food dish for fresh fruits & veg'



## Fancy Mouse



- breed dependent: weighing between 29-44 g & 100 g, length of 15cm up to 32 cm (the tail is 1/2 the total length)
- Life Span: 2 - 3 years on average.

## ----- Temperament

Fancy mice is a term to describe mice that have been selectively bred for pet or for show. The terms fancy & "feeder mice" are in fact the same variety of mouse. Human-directed artificial selection in fancy mice has created a variety of colors & patterns. These include black, chocolate, blue, white, cream, lilac, red, fawn, champagne, cinnamon, golden agouti, silver agouti, silver & dove. Mouse standards fall into one of five categories: Selfs (one solid color all over), Tans (mice of one solid color on the top with a tan belly), Marked either in Even or Broken patterns (spotting of a standard color on a base of white) & a miscellaneous category. The keeping of mice as pets pre-dates 1100 bc., when the first written mention of the hobby occurred. In Europe the breeding of fancy mice became popular through the introduction of Japanese stock in the early 17th century.

Mice are great pets, especially as a child's first pet. Their playful antics, curious nature & temperament make them ideal. They may bite at first, but do take well to humans. Hand-feed a couple sunflower seeds to get them interested in you. Mice are social creatures & are nocturnal; they are active at night & rest in the day. So they will be ready to play with you for a period, then rest. More than one mouse requires little extra effort or space & is far more entertaining for them & you. They should be of the same sex however. Consider the consequences of breeding. Mice can make a very good pet with consistent & gentle handling. Once out of the cage many enjoy running along their owners' arms, investigating pockets, or just sitting on the owner's lap. Care must be taken as mice have poor eyesight & may try to lean too far over an edge & fall. Never attempt to pick up a mouse by their tail- doing so can pull the tail completely off, skin the tail, or break the mouse's spine. The experience being painful for the mouse whether injury occurs or not, will certainly not endear the mouse to you. Mice may defecate or urinate when first being handled, especially if they are nervous. This behaviour usually doesn't last too long if the mouse is being handled correctly.

## Housing



Mice are friendly, smart, comical, clean, entertaining & a good pet choice.

A 10 - 15 gallon fish tank is ideal (per mouse) with more space always the best choice. Make sure you have a lid for the tank. They will climb or scale everything in their environment to find an escape route! It is their nature to be curious & go exploring, don't aid it. Fill the tank or cage 1/3 full with bedding. They love to pile it up, & bury their food in it. There are some very elaborate cages available, designed especially for mice & found in most pet stores. These will often be self contained & will feature tunnels, tubes, ramps & feed spots. Mice like to sleep in a place that is dark, warm & dry. You will need to provide some form of den or sleeping box. Any tiny box or container with a little hole for an entrance will do. Use soft fabric materials for the sleeping box. You should also include an exercise wheel. Mice are very active animals, they need an entertaining environment. Let your imagination be your guide & be creative.

- **Water:** The water bottle is best as a constant water source. mice tend to tread in water bowls or tip them, they often become a labour. Make sure you replace the water in the same spot each time for them to find it. Remember to change the water & clean the water bottle often!
- **Substrate:** For substrate (bedding) aspen is a good way to go because it doesn't give off any oil. Give them something to tunnel in. Most pet stores carry a ready made product. Shredded paper may also be used. Cedar & pine are not recommended & avoid sawdust as it causes breathing problems. Add some rags, fur scraps or soft fabric material for the sleeping box.
- **Toys:** Mice teeth grow continuously. They need a few wood items to gnaw at. Toilet paper & paper towel tubes; The mice will run in & out of the tube before settling down to a good gnaw. Ladders, ropes, hammocks, tunnels & places to investigate keeps the mouse engaged, active & healthy.

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## Health



Mice are robust animals, & with good care & attention may likely never be ill. Signs that your mouse is sick include not eating or losing weight, dull coat, runny eyes & nose, or huddling in a corner not appearing active. In general, if you notice your mouse is sick make sure to completely clean & disinfect the cage & change the bedding. Make sure it has plenty of food & water & isn't in drafts or damp areas. Respiratory Infections are generally caused from being in drafts and/or damp bedding. A scent gland tumor is a common tumor found in mice, & occurs most often in elderly mice. Noticeable as a small hard lump the tumor will continue to grow if not treated. Too many greens & vegetables in their diet can cause diarrhea. If your mouse has a diet high in vegetables remove them & they should be OK. Sometimes a mouse is prone to fits, where it dashes around in circles until it falls down exhausted. There is no apparent reason for this and no known treatment.

## Behavior & Interaction

When bringing a new Mouse home, do not expect that it will come into your hands immediately as the Mouse will still be afraid or shy. Remember, mice are fast, small & can be pretty hard to catch so make sure they are in a relatively contained area at first! In order to have your mouse to trust you, you should occasionally give it treats. Avoid handling too much until it gains trust in you & will come on his own. This usually takes a couple weeks! Patience is an important factor. Also, to avoid any bites from your mouse, make sure that you wash your hands well after handling any food. When a mouse squeaks, it means that the mouse is afraid or agitated. Play fighting goes on frequently among mice, especially pups. They will pounce or jump on each other, then give chase around the tank. Fun to watch!

Bathing should only be done in exceptional circumstances. Bathing removes natural & essential oils from the mouse's coat, which can cause the mouse to catch a chill & die. mice are naturally very clean & will self groom. Your mouse's natural habitat would have it evading predators, hunting for food, burrowing underground, so they are very active. That energy needs to be released. Ideally with mice, you want to deck out the cage with things for them to investigate, places to go or items to play with. They must have things to gnaw at & maintain dental health. Provide a wood chew block somewhere in the cage. When picking up a mouse, it is best to try scooping it up (if you grab by the tail; closer to the mouse's body, not the tip) to prevent injury.

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