



Care and information sheet for your

# Fancy Rat

*(Rattus Norvegicus)*

<b>Adult Size</b>	Males weigh from 300 – 550 grams. Females weigh from 250 – 450 grams. Their body length is around 7 inches.	<b>Life Span</b>	2-4 years
<b>Male/Female Differences</b>	Males are usually larger than females and they can be sexed by eyeing the distance between the urethra and the anus; the distance is further apart in males.		
<b>Compatibility</b>	Rats are social animals that live in wherever in the wild. Interaction and socialization are important in developing a rat so that it will learn to trust you. If possible consider getting a pair so that you are not the only source of interaction the rat receives.		
<b>Origin</b>	Northern Europe.		
<b>Climate</b>	Average temperatures in cities, farms, wherever humans maintain surplus of goods.		
<b>Day Cycle</b>	Nocturnal.		
<b>Temperature</b>	Avoid extremes; an average home temperature of 75 F will suffice. Make sure they are not in a drafty room as this could lead to complications.		
<b>Lighting</b>	No special requirement besides a room's lighting.		
<b>Humidity</b>	Low or none.		
<b>Habitat/Territory</b>	Rats live wherever humans live; in the wild they live in burrows.		

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<b>Substrate/Bedding</b>	Aspen bedding is a good option given their cage is properly ventilated, since a drawback to aspen is its dustiness. Wood pulp substrates are better options because of the low amounts of dust and they provide more comfort to the rat. Newspaper pellets can also be used as substrate since they are dust free.
<b>Hiding Place/Den</b>	Chew safe toys and non-toxic hiding places will increase their level of interaction when they are left alone. Hiding places will give them a comfort zone and an escape during the day.
<b>Cage Type</b>	Aquarium cages of 30" or longer are good as long as it is well ventilated. You can go with a wire cage if it is escape proof. Exercise is key here, with toys, wheels, ramps and platforms, so bigger is better.
<b>Diet</b>	A decent diet will consist of pet blocks, nuts, grains, oats, and seeds. For more variety throw in some fresh veggies and fruits, bland human foods like dry pasta, scrambled eggs, yogurt, and cooked white meat. They will gladly accept the change.
<b>Supplements</b>	Vitamins in water help supply missing nutrients from captive diets. Depending on what you feed, supplements such as enzymes and vitamin tablets can aid in their digestion and a healthier looking coat.
<b>Diet Precautions</b>	Avoid high-calorie diets that contain sunflower seeds and fatty foods that could lead to obesity. Dry fruits and treats should be given sparingly. Signs of a poor diet could be hair loss, chronic infections, and staining around the eyes and nose.
<b>Feeding</b>	A rat's stomach is about half the size of their head so try not to overfeed. Give about that size twice a day and throw away the leftovers.
<b>Water Source</b>	Most store rats are used to water bottles, but they will also drink from a bowl. Rinse and wash both and supply fresh water each day. Consider bottled or purified water. The water bottle may require a metal guard as the rat will gnaw and render the bottle useless.
<b>Grooming</b>	Pet safe wipes are the best option for cleaning your rat. Occasionally you could bathe your rat, but do it very carefully with pet safe shampoo and then dry them quickly with a towel. Afterwards brush them with a nylon bristle brush.
<b>Oral and Foot Care</b>	Rats need chew toys or else their teeth will grow continuously. Supply them with chew treats, or pumice blocks.
<b>Proper Handling</b>	Rats are one of the most sociable creatures next to dogs, cats and ferrets. They are not known to bite. As with any new pet give them time to get to know you and eventually you will be able to put them in your pocket with no problem. Proper handling is holding them with both hands and securing them

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so they won't fall down. Never grab them by the tail.

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**Habitat Maintenance** Rats tend to go to the bathroom in the corners. Spot clean their cage daily and at least once a week clean out the whole thing.

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**Health Concerns** Diarrhea due to poor diet, congenital cancers, tumors respiratory problems, mites and obesity. A proper nutrition can help prevent the cancer and eliminate the threat of obesity. Proper ventilation and dust-free bedding will help prevent respiratory problems and mites.

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