



## Mouse Information

### *Check list*

- Cage made from glass with a critter lid or wire with narrow bars
- Bedding
- House
- Water bottle or bowl
- Food dish
- Exercise wheel
- Toys
- Food
- Wormer
- Salt wheel
- Vitamin supplement

### *Setting up your cage*

Choose a position for your mouse cage that is not near any drafts or direct sunlight. Place a thin layer of bedding across the bottom of the cage. Position the mouse house in one corner of the cage. Fill the water bowl / bottle and position this in the cage ensuring your mouse can easily access it. Fill your food dish and place this near the water. Position the toys and exercise wheel so as they can be played with without knocking the food, water or house. Now introduce your mouse to its new home.

### *Purchasing your mouse*

Mice are very sociable and enjoy living in large groups. Decide if you would like male or female mice. Watch the mice play for a while before choosing yours, this way you can see what kind of personality it has and how active and healthy it is. Our staff member will be able to advise you as to how many mice can comfortably live in your cage. If you choose female mice it doesn't really matter how old they are or if they are different ages when you introduce them together. However if you decide to get male mice, to prevent them from fighting we suggest you purchase them as babies or ones that have been kept together since they were babies. Always get the same sex unless you plan to breed from them.

### *Arriving home*

Your mouse will be given to you in a transport container. Leave your mouse in this container until its cage is set up. Once your cages are set up, gently place the container in the cage and leave one end opened. This way if your mouse is feeling a little nervous it can come out at its own pace when it feels more comfortable. Mice like to be gently handled for the first few days. Just gently stroke your mouse with one finger until it is used to you. After this you will be able to pick your mouse up and hold it without your mouse being afraid.

### *Feeding your mouse*

You will need to feed your mouse on a daily basis. It is important to measure out the correct quantities, as mice can easily become very obese. Feed a commercially formulated mouse mix along with a selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. Avoid giving too many seeds, as these are quite fatty; also avoid lettuce, celery and cheese. Cheese can actually cause constipation and make your mouse very smelly; lettuce and celery have a large water content and can cause diarrhoea. Small pieces of apple, carrot, cucumber, zucchini, capsicum, mushrooms, peas, beans, broccoli, silver beet and cauliflower can be given daily. As a very special treat in moderation you can give your mouse a very small taste of peanut butter. Water should be changed daily unless it is in a bottle, then it can be changed every other day.

### ***Cage maintenance***

The bedding in your mouse cage should be changed every three days, more often if you have three or more mice. When you remove the bedding you should wash the cage, toys and house in disinfectant, always rinse with fresh water and dry. Put fresh bedding back into the cage and reposition all bowls, toys and beds. Now your mouse can go back into its home.

### ***Worming***

Like cats and dogs, mice need to be wormed every three months. All you need to do is purchase a small animal wormer and follow the directions. Repeat this every three months.

### ***Vitamin supplements***

Mice require a complete and balanced diet to remain healthy. If they are not getting a varied diet vitamin supplements should be added to their water. Mice require a salt lick stone to provide all of their bodies salt requirements. These can be hung in the cage and replaced once finished.

### ***Breeding***

Mice can start breeding from the age of 12 weeks, however they should not be bred until they are at least 16 weeks old. The gestation period is between 18 and 21 days. The average litter size is between 6 – 8. A baby mouse is called a kitten. If you are planning to breed mice before you start you will need to be prepared. You will require a community tank where both the males (bucks) and females (does) are kept. Once the doe is pregnant she needs to be removed and placed in her own cage. Her kittens stay in this cage with her from birth until they are around 27 days old. The doe then needs to stay in this cage or go into a cage with females only to be rested for a month before going back into the community tank again. Potentially you will require a cage per doe, a community cage, a cage for young does and a cage for young bucks. Before breeding ensure that you will have somewhere to sell or home your mice as your population will expand rapidly.

### ***Toys***

Mice require toys to provide exercise and to keep their active minds entertained. Mice's teeth constantly grow so they need to be given wooden toys or rawhide to chew on to maintain their teeth.

### ***Fit and healthy mice***

A healthy mouse will be active, have a shiny full coat, firm droppings and clear eyes and nose. If your mouse doesn't appear like this or stops eating you should take it to the vet. A common problem with mice is missing fur. This can be the cause of mites or lice. As a preventative you can treat your mouse with mite and lice spray on a monthly basis. Poor diet and lack of vitamins cause diarrhoea and poor condition, this should be looked at for the cause of illness.