



MISFITS RESCUE



Mice Care Sheet

Overview

Mice are small, social, intelligent rodents that make engaging and inquisitive pets. They are generally docile and handleable when socialised from a young age, making them suitable for beginner pet owners who meet their environmental, nutritional, and welfare needs. This care sheet follows welfare principles consistent with RSPCA guidance, including appropriate housing, nutrition, health care, and enrichment.

Lifespan

With correct care, mice typically live 1.5–3 years, depending on breed, genetics, and overall health.

Housing

Mice require a secure, well-ventilated cage with sufficient floor space for movement and enrichment.

Cages must be escape-proof, and juveniles can be housed in smaller temporary enclosures but should be upgraded as they grow.

Key Housing Guidelines:

- **Space:** The cage should be large enough to allow for varied enrichment, including digging, climbing, and foraging.
- **Floor Area:** A minimum of 80x50cm is advised for a small group of mice.
- **Height:** The cage should be tall enough to accommodate deep bedding (20-30cm) and climbing toys.
- **Bar Spacing:** To prevent escape, bar spacing should be 6-9mm or less.
- **Environment:** Mice should have a solid floor (not wire) to protect their feet, and cages must be well-ventilated to prevent respiratory issues.



Housing Males and Females

Male and female mice should not be housed together unless breeding is planned, as mice reproduce very quickly. For pet mice, it's best to keep same-sex groups.

Female mice generally live well in pairs or small groups, but male mice are highly territorial and can become aggressive if housed together unless they have been neutered. Unneutered males are best kept individually to prevent fighting and injury.



Always introduce new mice carefully and monitor social interactions to ensure their safety and wellbeing.



Bedding / Substrate

At least 8+ inches of wood-based bedding is recommended for mice to encourage their natural burrowing and nesting behaviour. Suitable substrates include paper-based bedding, aspen shavings, or recycled cardboard bedding. Avoid cedar or pine shavings, as these can be harmful to respiratory health.

Bedding should be spot cleaned daily and replaced fully at least once every 2 weeks to maintain hygiene.

Temperature and Environment

Mice are comfortable in ambient temperatures of 18–24°C. Avoid placing cages in direct sunlight, near drafts, or in overly humid conditions. Sudden temperature changes can cause stress or illness.

Furnishings and Enrichment

Enclosures must include hiding places, tunnels, nesting materials, and objects to climb or gnaw on.

Wheels for mice should be a minimum of 8 inch (21cm) with many often doing better with 10+ inch wheels; this ensures there is no unnatural curvature of their spin whilst using their wheel. Wheels must be upright with a solid base and have bearings that do not risk the tail catching.

Climbing: platforms, accessories, ladders, logs and branches provide mice with the opportunity to express natural climbing behaviours as well as shelter.

Chew toys, tunnels, and different substrate textures within their homes satisfy natural behaviours like running, climbing, tunnelling, nesting and gnawing. Suitable textures include aspen shavings, coco coir, beech chips, meadow hay, large flat stones, hemp bedding or mats, and shredded cardboard.

Diet

Mice should be fed a high-quality commercial rodent mix as the main diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be offered in small amounts, along with occasional protein treats such as mealworms or cooked egg.

Vegetables can include dark leafy greens (bok choy, kale), broccoli, carrots, green beans and parsley.

Fruits can include berries, apples (no seeds), kiwi, melon (in moderation).

Avoid poisonous foods such as grapes, raisins, rhubarb, chocolate, onions, garlic, oranges, or raw meat.

Always introduce new foods gradually and remove uneaten perishables to avoid spoilage.

Water

Fresh water must always be available, preferably via a sipper bottle to prevent contamination. Water bottles should be cleaned and refilled daily.

Handling

Mice benefit from gentle, regular handling to maintain socialisation. Always support the body fully and avoid sudden movements. Some mice may be shy or defensive initially; allow them time to acclimate.



Health and Veterinary Care

Common health issues include respiratory infections, overgrown teeth, skin conditions, and tumours. Any signs of laboured breathing, weight loss, lethargy, or abnormal behaviour should be assessed by a qualified small-animal veterinarian.

New animals should be quarantined for at least 2 weeks before introduction to established groups to prevent disease spread.

Cleaning and Maintenance

Spot-clean daily to remove waste and soiled bedding. Food dishes should be washed after each use. Perform a full cage clean every 2-4 weeks, replacing all bedding and sanitising the enclosure with a rodent-safe disinfectant.

Legal and Welfare Considerations

Owners and carers have a legal duty of care under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 to meet the five welfare needs of mice. This includes providing a suitable environment, appropriate diet, opportunities to express natural behaviour, suitable companionship, and protection from pain, suffering, injury, and disease.

