Mouse FAQs

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Mice make great pets, but it's important to know how to take care of them. What kind of cage to get, what food to feed, and how to play with your pet mouse are all things that you need to learn. If you have questions about pet mice, you're in the right place! Below, we will talk about the questions you may have about your new pet mouse.

How long do pet mice live?

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Pet mice usually live about one to two years, but they could live as long as three years.

How many mice should I get?

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Mice are very friendly, social animals, so they are much happier when they have friends to live with. Mice like to live in pairs or small groups.

What kind of cage does my pet mouse need?

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The two best kinds of cages for mice are wire cages and aquariums. The cage should be at least 12" x 14" for four to five mice. Mice love to climb, so the cage should be tall and have lots of levels and platforms for climbing.

If you buy a wire cage, make sure that the wire spacing is small. Mice can escape easily from cages designed for other small pets, so look for a cage that has 1/4" wire spacing. Mice will usually like a wire cage best because they can climb the walls of the cage, and it's easier for you to attach accessories like shelves and exercise wheels to the side of the cage. Make sure the floor of the cage is

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solid or covered. Wire mesh floors can hurt your mouse's sensitive feet.

If you choose to keep your mouse in an aquarium, make sure you have a mesh lid that fits tightly on the top. You will need to put lots of items in the aquarium for your mouse to climb on. Aquariums need to be cleaned more often, but you can use a deep layer of bedding without having to worry about your mouse making a mess kicking it out of the cage.

What should I put in the cage?

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Put the following things in your pet mouse's cage:

- Bedding
- Nest box
- Nesting material
- Exercise wheel
- Tunnels and tubes
- Ladders
- Cotton ropes
- Toys
- Water bottle
- Shallow ceramic food bowl

What kind of bedding should I use?

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Your mouse will like a deep layer of Aspen wood bedding the best. Make sure you don't use any cedar or pine bedding. These can be dangerous for your mouse. You will also need to place nesting material in your mouse's nest box.

What kind of toys will my mouse like?

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Mice are very active and they need lots of stimulation, so the best toys are toys that give your mouse the exercise he needs while entertaining him. Here are some of the toys that your mouse will like:

- Silent Spinner Exercise Wheel
- Chewbular Play Tube
- Mini or Small Nut Knot Nibbler
- Munch Balls Wicker Toys
- Wooden Chew Toys

All of these toys are safe for your mouse, provide him with lots of fun exercise, and keep him from getting bored while he's in his cage. Mice that aren't given toys get bored, and they can do things you don't want them to, like chew or gnaw too much on things they shouldn't or try to escape.

What do pet mice eat?

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Mice are "herbivores," which means that they eat plants, not meat. Pet mice should be given a mix of a quality pellet diet and a grain and seed loose mix. You should supplement that food with small amounts of fresh fruit and vegetables. Mice love sunflower seeds, but don't give them too many!

How can I tame my mouse?

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Mice are pretty easy to tame as long as you don't try to rush it. Here is what you should do to tame your mouse:

- Let your mouse get used to his new home before you try to play or touch him
- Spend time around his cage talking to him, but not trying to reach in
- Offer him some treats from your hand
- After he will take treats from your hand, he will probably start walking on your hands or letting you pick him up

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How should I hold my mouse?

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You must be very gentle with your mouse! He's very small, so be careful not to squeeze him. Cup your hand under him and lift him so you don't accidentally hurt him. If he tries to jump down or get away, hold him very gently by the base of his tail (where his tail meets his body) with one hand while you cup his body with the other hand. When you pick up your mouse, he may jump down or fall off your hand, so always hold him above your lap, a pillow, or another soft surface.

When can I hold and play with my mouse?

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Mice are nocturnal, which means they are very active in the evening and at night and sleep most of the day. The best time to play with your mouse is after it gets dark out.

When should I clean my mouse's cage?

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Mice need to mark their territory, which means that they get upset when they can't smell their scent in their cage. You should only clean out and wash the entire cage when you have to. However, there are still daily and weekly chores you will have to do.

Daily:

- Clean up any messes or spills
- Remove most of the soiled bedding
- Give your mouse fresh food and water

Weekly:

- Change all bedding, but leave a small amount of the used bedding in the cage
- Wash and disinfect cage if necessary

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