



## HELPFUL HINTS TO CARE FOR YOUR NEW RAT OR MOUSE

Congratulations on the purchase of your new rat or mouse. Following are a few hints to help you care for your new rat or mouse. If, after reading these hints, you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Jerry for advice and help.

Kirrawee Pic-a-Pet sells domesticated rats and mice. They are quite clean, very intelligent and social pets. They are a great pet for kids and adults alike.

The average lifespan of a rat is 2 - 3 years and a mouse is 1 - 2 years.

### HOUSING:

Rats and mice should be housed in a solid plastic or glass cage with excellent ventilation and a very secure lid. Rats and mice love to gnaw through things, therefore plastic or glass is safe. It is best to choose a cage that is as big as you can afford and have room for. **Minimum cage sizes are: Rats** - 35cm L x 28cm W x 44cm H **Mice** - 35cm L x 28cm W x 30cm H. Wire cages should not be used as they are too draughty and allow bedding to fall out and are hard to clean and disinfect.



### BEDDING:

Cover the floor with wood shavings or paper. Do not use straw and it is too sharp. Sawdust should not be used as the fine particles can irritate your pets eyes and nose. Make a special sleeping area with a bird nesting box filled with shredded paper for example.

### EXERCISE:

Kirrawee Pic-a-Pet has plastic toys available for the cage that will stimulate your pets mind and provide exercise for it. Place some fruit tree branches and a rock in the cage as well. **Chewing:** Rats and Mice must gnaw at things. This helps to grind down their teeth as their teeth don't stop growing. The fruit tree branches or sticks and chewing toys are best.

**TIP:** Rats and mice should not be left to run loose in the house as they will not only destroy furniture and bedding, but could chew electrical cords.

### FEEDING:

Kirrawee Pic-a-Pet sells quality dry rat and mouse pellet mix. This mix should provide a balance diet and form most of their diet. Small amounts of fruit and vegetables such as broccoli, sprouts, carrot, avocado, tomato, apple and banana should also be provided. Occasionally, give your rat a corn-on-the-cob and your mouse loves dandelion leaves. (These should be given as treats only.) Use stainless steel bowls for their food as these are easy to clean. Feed them once a day and leave the food in the cage. Fresh water should be given daily in a non-drip bottle with a stainless steel nozzle. This will stop the cage from getting damp. Wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly before feeding to rats or mice.

### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS;

Rats and mice are social animals and live in colonies. They can live alone but will enjoy a playmate. It is best to keep same sex animals as male/female sets will result in much breeding and babies. **Do not keep two male mice together** as they will fight. **Rats and mice should not be housed together.**

### HANDLING:

Begin handling your pet rat or mouse by slowly stroking them for a few times a day for a couple of days. This will allow them to get used to your smell. Hand raised, domestic rats and mice rarely bite. Fear rather than aggression could cause them to bite. If you have been handling food, wash your hands first as they can mistake your finger for food, which may result in a bite.

**Rats** - Scoop your rat up with both hands, allowing it to rest comfortably in your palm. **Don't pick it up by their tail.**

**Mice** - Use the same method as for rats, but you can use one hand.

**CLEANING:**

Clean the food bowl and water bottle daily as this will help to keep your pet mouse or rat happy and healthy. It will also keep odours down. (rats generally don't smell, but male mice do give off a strong musk odour). The bedding should be changed every 3 - 5 days. Clean and disinfect the cage, toys and all other accessories once a week with a special small animal disinfectant. Kirrawee Pic-a-Pet will advise you of the best disinfectant to use.

**KEEP YOUR RAT OR MOUSE WELL FED, CLEAN AND COMFORTABLE. GIVE IT EXERCISE AND TOYS TO PLAY WITH. GIVE IT YOUR ATTENTION AND YOU WILL HAVE A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND FIT RAT OR MOUSE**