

# Fancy Rat

**Lifespan:** 2-3 years

**Diet:** Rats are omnivores, and it's very important that they get all of their dietary needs met to ensure that they live a happy and healthy life. Rats can have quite a few different foods, but not all of them are healthy for them or should be fed frequently. They should always be fed rat blocks, these should be the base to their diet as they provide for most of their dietary needs. However, it's good to have a variety in their daily food. With that being said we would recommend creating a rat mix using rat blocks (ratio 3:1 rat blocks to other foods), cheerios, dried pasta, oatmeal, pumpkin seeds, and dried mealworms. Also, they can have boiled/grilled chicken and scrambled/boiled eggs a few times a week as a nutritious and protein filled snack, as well as a mix of various fruits and veggies, e.g. carrots, cucumbers, strawberries, blueberries, and avocados (NOT the peel or the pit). Some foods that are either toxic or unhealthy for rats include but are not limited to: raw sweet potato, chocolate, poppy seeds, citrus fruits/mango (males), sticky foods (can be choked on), and dried corn (a lot of rat foods have corn in them, but they can contain mold/fungi). When in doubt google it before you feed it to them.

**Substrate:** Carefresh/paper bedding changed weekly or fleece washed weekly. Pine, and cedar wood chips can release scents/dust that can irritate the rats respiratory system, so even though they can be cheaper, they are not recommended.

**Habitat:** A large multi-level well ventilated cage with ½ inch bar spacing. Any bigger than that and smaller rats will be able to squeeze through the cage.

**Cage Accessories:** Rats are very smart and playful creatures. Because of this, they need things to entertain them. Bird toys, hammocks, sleep sacks, and hides are all examples of things to put in the cage with them.

**General Needs:** Rats teeth never stop growing, so they need wooden toys or a wooden stick called a chew stick to be in the cage with them at all times so it can grind their teeth down. They will also need a water bottle, and a food dish which should be washed weekly.

**Other Supplies:** Contrary to popular belief, rats are actually quite clean when taken care of properly. It would be best to invest in a cage cleaner and possibly small animal wipes (wipes made specially for animals to freshen them and clean them without giving them a bath) to keep everything nice and tidy. It is best to not bath them, as bathing them will strip them of their natural oils and will cause them to produce more in compensation, which in turn will cause their smell to be stronger.

**Males vs. Females:** Males tend to be calmer than females, but they have a stronger odor to them, and they mark their territory by urinating more frequently than the females do. Females although they tend to be more active, can be sweet as well, and they don't smell as strong as the males do.

**Personality:** Rats are very playful and social. They love interaction from both humans and other rats. They NEED to have other rats living with them, or they will get depressed and be lonely. They are very intelligent creatures, and can even be taught tricks! They love to snuggle, and oftentimes can be found hanging out in their owners hoodie pockets and other places similar to that. Rats usually do not bite unless startled, or provoked. They love being pet, and will take treats right out of your hand (or your plate if you're not careful!). They are very rewarding and fun pets to own.