



BurgessTM
SINCE 1790

ExcelTM

Rat

Care Guide



An easy-to-use reference guide
to looking after your rats.

The British Family pet experts

A British family company

Our strong family values and traditions are core to the Burgess story. For generations we have produced the finest quality foods for people, pets and animals.

Total Burgess Mill Staff 1930s



200 year heritage in agriculture

Our 200-year heritage in agriculture has helped forge strong relationships with the farming community and the ingredients for our recipes are sourced locally wherever possible.

Experts in animal nutrition

The health and happiness of pets is our number one goal and our expert knowledge in animal nutrition helps us achieve this. Of course as pet lovers ourselves, we're also passionate about making great quality, tasty foods.



Dr Suzanne Moyes
MVB MRCVS

Burgess Excel Care Guide to Rats

Welcome to the Burgess Care guide for rats. Please read through this guide and keep it handy for reference.

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www.burgesspetcare.com

Introduction to Rats

Rats



SMALL PETS



Rat



LIFE EXPECTANCY:	2 - 3.5 years
RAT NAMES:	Male - Buck Female - Doe Young - Kitten
WEIGHT:	300g - 500g
ANIMAL FAMILY:	The Rodent Family
BEHAVIOUR:	Most active at night and at dawn and dusk.
DIET:	Omnivorous (a little bit of everything)
HOBBIES:	Grooming and completing obstacle courses

Why Rats make great pets

More and more people have been choosing rats as pets and we think we know why...

- **Smart**

Rats are extremely intelligent and can therefore be trained easily using positive reinforcement and taught lots of tricks.

- **Clean!**

Contrary to what you may expect, rats are very clean animals spending up to a third of their time grooming themselves.

While rats may not live as long as other pets, they need an owner who is prepared to dedicate a lot of time to them. Rats love interaction with humans, and above all mental stimulation – you should train your rats and give them plenty to keep their minds occupied so that they don't get bored!



Did you know?

The ancient Egyptians worshipped rats and the Romans considered them as lucky!

General Nutrition

Rats are omnivores and have adapted to eat a mixed but balanced diet. It is important that rats are fed in an interactive way, for example, by hiding their food around their housing in order to keep their brains active and encourage natural foraging behaviour.

Burgess Excel Rat Nuggets is a great, complete food that when fed alongside a continuous supply of **clean, fresh water** offers your rats all they need in order to stay happy and healthy. If they are given the opportunity rats will selectively feed, meaning that they will only eat parts of the diet they need, so it's important that you feed them a balanced nugget rather than a muesli. These balanced nuggets should be fed in an interactive way, as discussed above.

You should keep rats' mealtimes regular as they like a routine and water should be provided in bottles suitable for hamsters as rats will struggle with the tradition ball stopper bottles. If you see your rats eating their own faeces, don't panic as this is perfectly normal behaviour and helps them get all the nutrients they need.

Occasionally

- Dog kibble
- Most fruit and vegetables
- Chicken
- Hard boiled eggs
- Mealworms
- Pasta
- Brown rice
- Baby food

Not at all

- Chocolate
- Cake
- Crisps
- Apple seeds
- Blue cheese
- Carbonated drinks
- Caffeine
- Sweets
- Mouldy food
- Oranges
- Peanuts
- Poppy seeds
- Raw beans
- Sprouts
- Onions

Balanced Nutrition



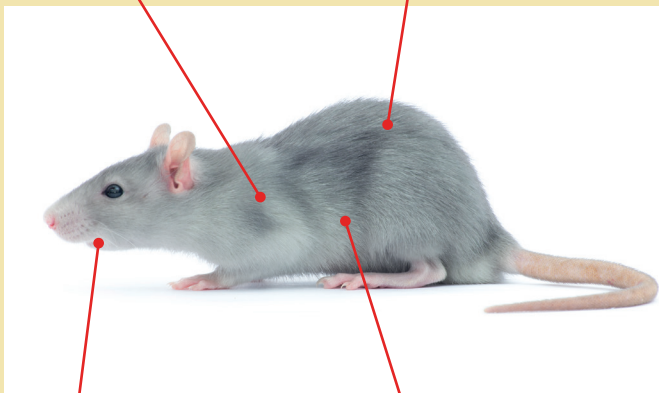
Balanced Protein

Balanced protein is essential as part of your rats' diet



Linseed

Linseed will help support a healthy skin and coat



Mono-component food

Prevents selective feeding



Prebiotics

Food with prebiotics will help to support your rats' digestion



Fresh Water

Fresh, clean water is essential to your rats' health

A Complete Food for Rats



Burgess Excel Rat Nuggets

Composition: Rice • Wheat • Maize • Wheatfeed • Oatfeed • Hipro Soya* • Beet Pulp • Poultry Meal • Brewer's Yeast • Linseed 1% • Poultry Fat • Minerals • Limestone • Salt • Short chain fructo-oligosaccharides 0.25%.

Analytical Constituents: Crude Protein 14% • Crude Oils and Fats 4.5% • Crude Fibre 4.5% • Crude Ash 5.5%.

Nutritional Additives: Vitamin A (retinyl acetate) (E672) 25,000 iu/kg • Vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) (E671) 2,000 iu/kg • Vitamin E (dl Alpha tocopherol acetate) (3a700) 125 mg/kg • Calcium Iodate Anhydrous (E2) 2.34 mg/kg • Sodium Selenite (E8) 0.22 mg/kg • Ferrous Sulphate Monohydrate (E1) 133 mg/kg • Copper Sulphate Pentahydrate (E4) 28 mg/kg • Zinc Oxide (E6) 139 mg/kg • Manganous Oxide (E5) 16 mg/kg.

Technological Additives: Tocopherol Extracts of Natural Origin 100mg/kg.



Burgess Excel Rat Nuggets are a complete, nutritionally balanced food for rats with:



PREBIOTICS

Contains natural prebiotics to help support healthy digestion



LINSEED

Helps maintain healthy coat condition



VITAMINS

Contains vitamins A, D3 & E essential for rats' health



ANTIOXIDANTS

Contains antioxidants to help support a healthy immune system



BALANCED PROTEIN

Balanced protein to help support muscle growth

Housing & Exercise

How big should my rats' housing be?

Your rats' housing should be as big as possible to allow them room to get plenty of exercise, however, it should never be any less than 3 cubic feet per rat.

What goes in my rats' housing?

Your rats' housing should contain lots of levels so that they can climb. Nesting boxes should be provided for each rat, and a larger enclosed space to allow them to rest together. Rats also love a hammock or two to sleep in.

The housing floor should be covered in an absorbent material, such as the paper based rat bedding available from pet shops. Avoid sawdust or woodshavings as they can cause rats serious respiratory problems.



When should I let my rats out?

Rats should be allowed out of their housing in a secure space once a day for at least an hour. Ideally, you should spend as much time as possible with your rats in this area to help with bonding.



Where should I house my rats?

Rats should be housed indoors, with the housing regulated to around 20 degrees. The housing should also be kept away from draughts and direct sunlight and in a quiet area away from loud noises, but somewhere you spend a lot of time as they enjoy company.

The housing should be made from material that is gnaw proof. However, it is important to make sure the flooring of the housing is solid, as inappropriate flooring can cause problems with their feet.

What toys should I give my rats?

Some rats love toys, so things like plastic drainpipes and cardboard boxes are good to use. If you're going to get them a wheel, make sure it doesn't have any spokes but is solid and wide to avoid injury. Small boxes or toilet roll middles are great to hide their food in, while ropes are great to hang up for your rats to climb up and walk across.

How often should I clean my rats' housing?

Housing should be checked a couple of times a week, and you should remove any material that is soiled. You should give the housing a thorough clean at least once a week, but it's good to leave a small amount of unsoiled bedding in there to make sure your rats' housing still has familiar scents.

Behaviour & Companionship

How many rats should I keep?

Rats should never be kept on their own as they are likely to get depressed without the company of other rats. They're also mainly active at night so need another rat or rats to keep them company at night while humans are asleep. Rats can live in groups, but make sure the housing has plenty of room for each rat or they will get stressed. Where possible it's best to have same sex littermates who are bonded from birth, although rats can usually bond well if introduced before maturity. Avoid mixed sex groups to stop any chances of unwanted litters and fighting.



How should I handle my rats?

You should pick up your rats gently, holding them around the shoulders with one hand and supporting their rear end with your other hand. When they are used to you they will happily climb onto your hands and enjoy the interaction.



How much should I interact with my rats?

Rats love spending time with humans and can develop really strong bonds with them so you should spend as much time interacting with your rats as possible.

Can rats be aggressive?

Rats rarely bite and if one does so they usually have a reason, this could simply be mistaking your hand for food or due to fear if it is not well socialised yet. If a rat bites and it is out of character you should seek veterinary advice.

Can I keep rats with other pets?

It is inadvisable to keep rats with other animals as they are a prey species and can become severely stressed by other animals.



Health & Wellbeing

How often should I take my rats to the vet?

Rats should receive annual veterinary check-ups, and you should check them daily for any signs of ill health. Rats are a prey animal so will hide signs of ill-health, which makes the annual vet visit really important in order to avoid illness.

What should I do if one of my rats is acting differently?

If one of your rats shows a change in behaviour or in their eating or drinking patterns you should seek the advice of a vet as soon as possible.



Should I vaccinate my rats?

You do not need to vaccinate rats but should take them for an annual vet health check.

Should I wash my rats?

Rats shouldn't need to be bathed. It is usually the cage that would begin to smell if not cleaned, rather than the rat itself. Bathing will just cause them to become very stressed. Never force them into water, but some rats enjoy playing in water so it's worth giving them the opportunity to swim in a safe environment in a shallow container if they wish on occasion.



Should I neuter my rats?

Yes if you're keeping males and females together. You should always seek advice from your vet.

What are the common problems to look out for?

Respiratory Infections

These are the most common illnesses in rats and are usually caused by either overcrowding, dusty bedding, poor ventilation or an unclean cage.

If you notice that one of your rats has a runny nose or eyes, seems to struggle breathing or is losing weight you should take them to the vet.

Obesity

Rats can easily become obese if they are not given enough exercise or are given too much food/the wrong types of food.

You should ensure your rats have plenty of things to do in their housing to keep them active. You should also make sure you feed a complete rat nugget rather than a seed mix, as they will pick out the higher sugar seeds and grains and leave the healthy bits. Additionally, try not to feed them fatty or sugary treats.

Stress

Rats can become easily stressed due to problems in their environment, the wrong diet or pain. When they are stressed they can often leak a reddish liquid from their eyes, if you notice this you should take your rat to a vet as soon as possible.

Tumours

Rats are prone to certain types of tumours and therefore it's important that you take them to the vet for a regular check up.

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its rewards.

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