

# Caring for your RAT

## Total rat wellbeing

From daily enrichment and balanced nutrition to physical exercise and loads of love, we focus on every aspect of small pet care to help you create a full, healthy and joyful life for the rat you love. In this care guide, we'll cover the basics of what you need to keep your rat happy and healthy.



## Veggies, greens, & fruits

Veggies, greens, and fruits are an important part of your rat's daily diet. These fresh foods offer important vitamins and nutrients, help keep your pet hydrated, and provide enrichment to the daily routine.

**OFFER** romaine, bib, red or green leaf lettuce, kale, parsley, apples (no seeds), bananas, peas, and squash.

**AVOID** leeks, chives, cabbage, iceberg lettuce, and onions

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BEST FRUITS FOR SMALL PETS:**



*Did you know* that small amounts of high-quality seeds (such as oats, sunflower seeds, barley, and cooked brown rice) and species-appropriate insects make great treats for rats? Make sure to feed these tasty treats in moderation to avoid stomach upset.

## Treats

Treats (including fruits) are great for building the bond between you and your pet but should only be offered in moderation. All Oxbow treats are designed to be as wholesome as they are delicious.



## Hay

Supply grass hay to stimulate your rat's natural foraging and nesting behaviors. This type of physical activity helps prevent obesity. Many rats especially enjoy Oat Hay, which often contains tasty, immature seed heads.



## Fortified food

A daily recommended amount of a uniform fortified food is the foundation of your rat's daily nutrition and should make up approximately 75% of the daily diet. Oxbow foods are the ideal shape for nibbling which promotes healthy teeth.

**OFFER** the right food for your rat's stage of life. Oxbow's young and adult rat foods are formulated to meet your pet's specific nutritional needs as they progress along life's journey.

**AVOID** mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, or fruit. Rats are wired to selectively feed on these tempting morsels over the healthy pellets, leading to nutritional deficiencies.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT SELECTIVE FEEDING IN SMALL PETS:**



## Housing your rat

All rats need a safe place to spend time and avoid stress. Here are some tips to help create the ideal living space for your rat:

- Rats love to climb and explore, so choose a multi-level habitat for these athletic adventurers. Choose a wire cage with a solid bottom to accommodate ample amounts of bedding for burrowing and nesting.
- Outfit your rat's habitat with essentials such as multiple hideouts, a climbing rope, exercise wheel, a variety of natural chews, a food bowl, and two sources of fresh, clean water.
- Set up your rat's habitat near household activities but away from windows and heating and cooling ducts.
- No habitat is large enough to meet your pet's exercise and enrichment needs. Provide as much supervised time outside of the habitat as possible each day.

### CREATE AN ENRICHING AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT FOR RATS:



## Your rat's health

Your pet should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for checkups on their diet, behavior, and health.

- Be prepared for your pet's visits by making a list of any questions or concerns you may have ahead of time and bringing examples of your pet's nutrition, habitat, and husbandry-related items.
- Ask your veterinarian to recommend an appropriate age to have your rat spayed or neutered; this will increase the chances of a longer, healthier life for your pet.
- Many rat health problems are preventable with proper diet and care.

### REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Loose, soft, or lack of stool
- Small, dry, or infrequent stools
- Blood in the urine
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Sores on the feet
- Observed difficulty with chewing food
- Bald patches in the fur
- Abnormal eating or drinking
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)

### FIND A QUALIFIED EXOTICS VETERINARIAN NEAR YOU:



## Enriching your pet's world

All rats are wired to engage in a set of core instinctual behaviors each day. These behaviors include chewing, playing, hiding, and exploring. Intentionally encouraging these behaviors in healthy ways is called enrichment.

- Support all four behaviors in a variety of ways each day to support your rat's mental and physical health.
- Providing daily enrichment is a fun, interactive way to build your bond with your rat.
- Offer a variety of natural chews, engagement accessories, places for rest and relaxation, and exercise items daily.
- Oxbow's Enriched Life accessories are designed to help make enrichment fun, easy, and safe!

### GET MORE ENRICHMENT INSPIRATION FOR YOUR PET:



## Supplies for your rat

- A complete, uniform fortified food:** one of Oxbow's two premium formulas for young rats and mice, or one of three premium formulas for adult rats.
- Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment
- Water bottle, no-tip water dish, and no-tip food bowl**
- Multiple **Enriched Life natural chews and accessories**
- Large **play yard** for safe exercise outside the habitat
- Large habitat** with solid, non-wire flooring
- Multiple **hiding spaces**
- Bedding material**, such as **Oxbow's Pure Comfort**. Avoid aromatic cedar and pine shavings that may contain resin and could irritate your pet's lungs and skin.
- Natural Science supplements** as needed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RAT CARE AND BEHAVIOR, VISIT [WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM](http://WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM)

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