



# Caring for Your RAT

This care guide from Oxbow Animal Health will teach you everything you need to know about keeping your pet rat healthy and happy.



## FEEDING YOUR RAT

**Your rat is an omnivore, which means he eats both plant and animal material.**

Your rat requires a simple diet composed of a complete fortified food, fresh water served in both a sipper bottle and tip-proof dish, and veggies, greens, and fruits in appropriate daily amounts. Like humans, rats are prone to eating when bored, so it's important to provide healthy foods in proper amounts.



## FORTIFIED FOOD

**A complete, age-specific fortified food like Oxbow Essentials Adult Rat Food or Essentials Mouse & Young Rat Food is the best option for your rat. These specially designed foods are formed into the ideal shape for nibbling, which promotes healthy teeth.**



### Food Selection

Always choose an age-appropriate food formulated specifically for rats. Our Essentials Mouse & Young Rat Food is ideal for rats under six months of age. For adult rats, choose from one of Oxbow's two premium adult rat formulas.

### AVOID:

Mixes with nuts, seeds, and dried fruit because rats have a tendency to select those tempting morsels over the healthy food pieces



## DID YOU KNOW?

*Small amounts of high-quality seeds, such as oats, sunflower seeds, barley, and cooked brown rice make great treats for rats.*

## VEGGIES, GREENS & FRUITS

Veggies, greens, and fruits are an important part of your rat's daily diet. These items offer important vitamins and nutrients, contribute to hydration, and provide enrichment to your pet's daily routine. Check with your qualified exotics veterinarian for a full list of appropriate veggies, greens, and fruit choices. A good starter list of varieties to offer and avoid includes:

OFFER:	AVOID:
Romaine, kale, parsley, apples (without seeds), strawberries, bananas, peas, and squash	Leeks, chives, and onions



## HAY

**Supply grass hay to stimulate natural foraging and nesting, which helps in the prevention of obesity. Many rats especially enjoy Oat Hay, which often contains tasty, immature seed heads.**



### Hay Selection

Use our Taste & Texture Guide located on every hay package to determine your pet's preferences. We have many all-natural farm-fresh hays to choose from including Western Timothy, Orchard Grass, Oat Hay, Botanical Hay, Organic Meadow Hay, and Hay Blends - Western Timothy & Orchard. Also, check out our Harvest Stacks line of compressed hays for extra enrichment.

## TREATS

Treats are great for encouraging interaction between you and your pet, but they should only be given after basic daily foods have been eaten. Offering too many treats can cause your rat to refuse his healthy, essential foods. It's important to remember that not all treats are created equal! All Oxbow treat varieties are designed to be as wholesome as they are delicious.





## RAT BEHAVIOR

**Domesticated rats are clean, docile pets that rarely bite.**

They enjoy socialization with both other rats as well as humans. In addition, rats are very smart and can be trained to respond to their names and clicker training, to “fetch” objects, use a litter box, and climb ropes.

Want to keep your pet rat busy for hours? Fill a box with one of Oxbow’s grass hays and hide your rat’s favorite treat inside. He’ll enjoy both the excitement and challenge of the treasure hunt!



**Rats are  
INTELLIGENT  
& SOCIAL  
by nature.**

## YOUR RAT’S HEALTH

**You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for check-ups on your rat’s 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. Many rat health problems are preventable with proper diet and care. To locate a qualified exotics veterinarian near you, visit [aemv.org](http://aemv.org).

### REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Wet or soiled tail
- Blood in the urine
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)
- Overgrown front teeth
- Bald patches in the fur
- Lumps or sores on the body
- Sores on the feet
- Abnormal eating or drinking



## DID YOU KNOW?

*Rats cannot burp; because of this, avoid feeding gas-causing vegetables such as cabbage.*

## HOUSING YOUR RAT

**Rats require lots of space to foster creative living, playing, and burrowing.**

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 bedding such as Oxbow’s *Pure Comfort Bedding*, places to hide such as *Timothy CLUB Bungalow* or *Tunnel*, cardboard tubes, ropes, an exercise wheel, grass hay for burrowing and nesting, a food bowl, and two sources of fresh, clean water.

Set your rat’s cage up near household activities, but away from drafts. Newspaper, paper towels, facial tissue, and old mittens or socks also make excellent nesting materials for rats.

### AVOID:

Aromatic cedar and pine shavings that may contain resin and could irritate your pet’s lungs and skin



## SUPPLIES FOR YOUR RAT

- ☐ **Fortified age-specific food:** Oxbow Essentials Mouse & Young Rat Food for rats under six months of age or one of Oxbow’s two premium formulas for adults
- ☐ Variety of Oxbow’s **grass hays** for nesting
- ☐ **Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment
- ☐ A mix of healthy **veggies, greens, fruits, and seeds**
- ☐ Heavy **food bowl**
- ☐ **Water bottle** and heavy **water dish**
- ☐ **Cage** designed specifically for rats
- ☐ **Wheel, tube, and hay habitat** such as Oxbow’s *Timothy CLUB Bungalow* or *Tunnel* for hiding and playing
- ☐ Oxbow’s **Pure Comfort Bedding**

For more information about your rat’s nutrition and behaviors, visit [www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com).



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## Join the CONVERSATION



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