



RSPCA Rat Care Advice

RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS PET CARE FACTSHEET



CHECKING YOUR RATS

REGULARLY AND CAREFULLY CHECK YOUR RATS TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY ARE HAPPY AND HEALTHY.

- Check them morning and evening when they are normally active;
- Watch each rat in the cage without disturbing them, and check that each rat is moving, breathing well, sitting normally and has bright eyes and a shiny coat. Watch your rat closely. Any changes in their feeding, drinking, social behaviour or general activity may be an early sign of a problem;
- Check that your rats do not have any red staining around the eyes:
 - This is known as Chromodacryorrhoea and is produced when rats get stressed, and this can be due to something in their environment or potential health problems.
 - If small amounts are noticed, keep a close eye on your rats and make sure that it is not re-occurring. If you are at all concerned speak to your vet.
 - Rats regularly groom, so large amounts of this staining can indicate a severe problem. Consult your vet if you find this in your rats.
- Physically examine each rat regularly by running your fingers over their body to check for any lumps, bumps and that they are physically normal;
- Weigh your rats regularly, to make sure that they are not rapidly gaining or losing weight. It is best to do this at the same time as cleaning to minimise disturbance;
- Always handle your rats in a safe, considerate and confident manner (see our advice on [Handling your rats](#)) and make sure this is done by a responsible person if you are away;
- Observe your rats closely for signs of stress, pain, illness or injury (see our advice on [Signs of concern in rats](#)), and consult a vet immediately if you are at all concerned.
- Make sure these checks are done by a responsible person if you are away.



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