



## MOUSE CARE GUIDE: HEALTH

### GENERAL INFO

**Annual Exam:** It is important to take your mouse to the veterinarian for an annual exam to ensure your mouse is in good health. Mice do not require vaccines.

### GENERAL SIGNS OF ILLNESS

- Any behavioral change
- Lethargy
- Defensive aggression
- Disinterested in treats
- Changes in eating or drinking
- Disinterested in interacting with you
- Poor coat quality

**Lifespan:** Two to three years.

**Reproduction:** Mice become sexually mature and are able to reproduce at 50 days of age. Because surgery on small animals, particularly spaying, is extremely risky, most people choose to keep them intact and house only the same sex.

Mice control their temperature through their tails and the soles of their paws. **Try to maintain a room temperature of between 65–80 degrees F and a humidity of between 30–70%.**

### COMMON ISSUES

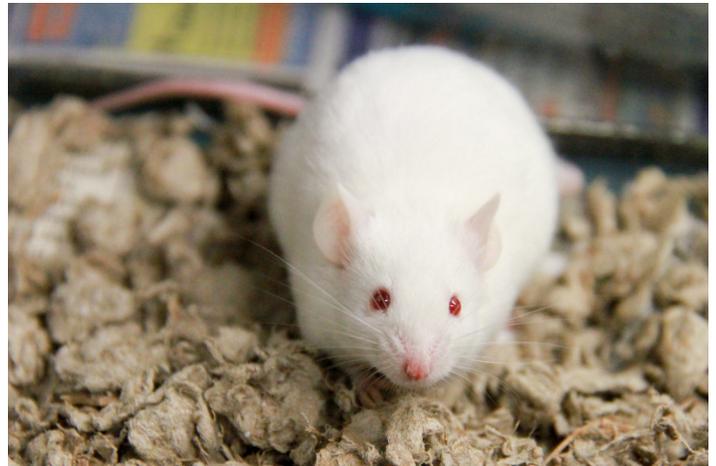
\* *Mice are known for trying to hide their illnesses. Signs and symptoms of illness are something you must watch for closely. If you see evidence of an illness, get your mouse to a veterinarian for treatment as soon as possible.*

#### Upper Respiratory Infection (URI)

Bacteria (most commonly mycoplasma) or viruses lead to URI and pneumonia. Signs of URI include sneezing, labored breathing, chattering, sniffing, eye or nose discharge, lethargy, weight loss, and lack of appetite.

#### Skin Conditions

If your mouse is excessively scratching and/or you notice sores on its skin (particularly around the shoulders, necks, and ears) this can be a sign that your mouse may have mites. Your veterinarian can do a skin scraping to look for mites under a microscope. Mites are treated easily with a prescribed pesticide such as Ivermectin. Other causes of rash and skin conditions are ringworm, bacterial infections, or allergies to bedding, food, or detergent. Clean patches of hair loss could be from barbering (see Mouse Care Guide: Behavior). Your veterinarian should be able to determine the cause of your mouse's problem and treat accordingly.



#### Tumors

Unfortunately mice are prone to tumors as they age, especially females. Tumors in mice are usually benign and can be surgically removed. Your veterinarian will be able to tell you if this is possible. If your mouse is over two years old, surgery may not be the best option. Surgery and anesthetics can be rough on older mice and the risks increase with age. If you don't opt for removal, mice can live with benign tumors for several months. However, as the tumor grows, it does eventually take its toll on your mouse. If your mouse, due to the tumor, is no longer able to move around on its own, is no longer interested in eating or drinking, and surgery is not an option, it may be time to consider humane euthanasia.