



RAT CARE GUIDE: BEHAVIOR

VOCALIZATION

Squeaking: When playing, disturbed, surprised, or picked up, some rats will squeak. This can be a protest to what is happening or a cry in pain.

Teeth Chattering/Grinding: This is called bruxing and it means your rat is happy! This is essentially a rattie purr. You may also see your rat's eyes boggle.

Hissing: When a rat is angry or defensive it will puff up and hiss. This is a warning and the rat may bite.

Grunting: Occasionally rats will grunt when excited.

Peeping: A happy sound sometimes heard when grooming.

SOUNDS OF RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

- Chirping
- Clicking
- Sneezing
- Whistling
- Gurgling

If your rat is making any of these sounds, take it to the veterinarian as soon as possible.

BODY LANGUAGE

Hopping: Rats hop, bounce, leap, and run around when they are happy and having fun. This is also called popcorning.

Licking: Rats lick themselves and each other to groom. If your rat licks you, it means you are loved!

Tail Wagging: Rats use their tails for balance but if you see your rat's tail wagging back and forth like a dog, it usually means it is nervous, stressed, or afraid. A few rats wag their tails when happy; you can tell what your rat means based on context.

Head Swaying: Rats have very poor eyesight, especially if they have red or pink eyes. They will sway their heads back and forth in order to create better depth perception.

Eye Boggling: Often, when a rat is bruxing, you will notice his eyes boggling. This happens as a result of the rat grinding his teeth when he is happy.

Shoving: If a rat pushes you or another rat with its front paws this means, "Stop it!" or "Go away!"

Helicopter Tail:

As mentioned before, rats use their tails for balance. Sometimes when a rat is picked up it will swing its tail around like a helicopter in order to try and steady itself. If your rat does this, you are not holding it correctly and should support your rat's hind end.

Freezing: A rat will stop suddenly and freeze if startled or frightened.

Urine Trails: Very dominant or outgoing rats, particularly males, will sometimes leave droplets of urine behind them. This is how they mark their territory. Unfortunately, this is just something that rats do. This is different than relieving the bladder which would leave a large wet spot — rats can be taught not to do this.

