



Teeny Snoots Rat Rescue

THE HEALTHY RAT

Rats are very clean animals and can get sick very easily with poor husbandry, dirty cages, dusty rooms, extreme temperatures and artificial scents. Keeping your rats' cage clean and free of dust is important in keeping them healthy. But, no matter what, your rats are likely to become sick at some point in their lives so it's important to know what to look out for. Your rats should be seen by a veterinarian regularly for check-ups. Rats are very good at hiding illness so once you begin to see symptoms of illness, they have already been sick for quite some time. Common signs of illness include sneezing, lethargy, weight loss, dull eyes, disinterest in food, low interaction, puffy fur, squinty eyes, red staining around the nose and eyes, and unusual chirping or grumbling. These symptoms can be serious and you should contact a vet immediately. Disease in rats can progress very quickly so do not delay seeking medical treatment. Spend lots of time with your rats so you know how they look and feel when they are healthy so you can quickly identify when they aren't feeling well!

MAKING A RATTY FIRST AID KIT

- Infant Advil
- Dark chocolate
- 1 ml syringes
- Saline wound wash
- Antibiotic eye drops
- Eye lubricant drops
- Heating pad
- Kitchen scale
- Small volume containers
- Benadryl
- Activated charcoal
- Baby food
- Emeraid IC Omnivore or Boost/
Ensure meal replacement
- Emergency evacuation kit with
their basic necessities
- Small emergency cage
- Emergency vet clinic phone
number

THE RAT GRIMACE SCALE

**Eye
Tightening**



In a happy, pain-free rat (left), the eyes are wide and bright. In a painful rat (right), the eyes are squinty and tight.

**Nose &
Cheek
Flattening**



In a happy, pain-free rat, the nose and cheeks are puffy and short. In a painful rat, the nose and cheeks look flatter and longer.

**Ear
Position**



In a happy, pain-free rat, the ears are pointing forward and curious. In a painful rat, the ears are turned outwards and may appear lower on the head.

**Whisker
Direction**



In a happy, pain-free rat, the whiskers are spread out loosely to the side of the face or may appear pointing backwards. In a painful rat, the whiskers are pointing forward and look stiff.

The Rat Grimace Scale was developed by Sotocinal et al. 2011. It is a visual scale that tells us if a rat is feeling pain or discomfort. In the graphic above, the rats on the left are happy and feel good while the rats on the right are in pain and discomfort. Use this scale to help understand how your rat feels!

WHAT IS PORPHYRIN?

Porphyrin is a reddish secretion produced behind the rat's eyes, and can appear around a rat's nose and eyes. Porphyrin plays important roles in the rat's health and can be an important indicator that your rat is in pain or sick. Small amounts of porphyrin are normal and healthy; however, a lot of porphyrin can indicate that your rat is sick, in pain or otherwise unhappy. If you're noticing frequent red staining around your rat's eyes and snout, pay close attention to how they are feeling and schedule some time to see your vet!

COMMON ILLNESSES AND WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Frequent sneezing; grumbling or chirping noises; reduced activity - Upper or lower respiratory infection; cardiac disease
Gasping for breath; open-mouth breathing; breathing with their head tilted up; wheezing - These are signs of serious respiratory distress and emergency care is required immediately.
Hard, solid, round lumps - Generally, lumps that can be pulled away from the body can be removed; lumps that feel embedded in the body's tissue are more serious. See your vet for a fine needle aspirate and assessment.
Soft, squishy lumps - If painful, it is possibly an abscess; if not painful, it could be a lipoma.
Eyes red, squinty, discoloured, turning white - Allergies; eye injury; eye infection; glaucoma; cataracts; pain or stress
Head pressing; confusion; holding and "chewing" food without actually taking a bite of the food; weak wrists - Pituitary or brain tumour; stroke; seizures
Walking flat-footed; lifting the back legs less; reduced ability to climb - Hind-leg degeneration (a non-fatal degenerative condition); stroke
Head tilt - Inner ear infection; brain tumour; stroke

BASIC RAT PHYSIOLOGY

Average Physiological Rates

Weight	Male: 300-700 g
	Female: 250-450 g
Average Life Span	2.5-3 years
Body Temperature	37.5°C
Daily Food Consumption	5 g/100 g of body weight
Daily Water Consumption	8-11 ml/100 g of body weight
Heart Rate	300-500 beats per minute
Breathing Rate	85 breaths per minute

(American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine Series, 2015)

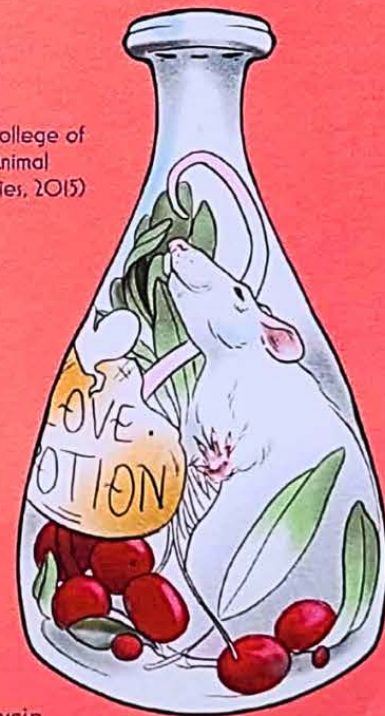


Image created and shared by Toronto artist @luce.tooth

COMMON ILLNESSES AND THE MEDS WE USE TO TREAT THEM

Pituitary tumour - bromocriptine, cabergoline
Respiratory infection - doxycycline, enrofloxacin (Baytril), azithromycin
Heart disease - furosemide, atenolol, pimobendan, clopidogrel
Pain - meloxicam, gabapentin, ibuprofen (infant if commercially bought)
Inner ear infection - Clavamox, enrofloxacin, doxycycline
Abscess - amoxicillin, enrofloxacin, Clavamox
Mites/Lice - selamectin, ivermectin

If your rat is prescribed medication, be sure to use it exactly as directed by your veterinarian and finish the full course of antibiotics even if your rat is feeling better.

LEARNING TO LOVE BEING A RAT

Teeny Snoots Rat Rescue is a not-for-profit rescue owned and operated solely by volunteers in St. Thomas, Ontario. At Teeny Snoots, our goal is to help rats learn to love being themselves and to help the community learn to love rats. Education is a huge part of Teeny Snoots, so please reach out with any rat-related questions!

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TEENYSNOOTSRATRESCUE
CamScanner

