INSIDE FLAP • KEEPER HABITS

4 Keys to Long-Term Health

Small Daily Habits That Prevent 95% of Vet Visits

Listen for Sneezes & Clicks

Hold your rat up to your ear ('rat phone')! Healthy breathing is completely silent. If you hear honking, clicking, or persistent sneezing, see an exotic vet early for antibiotics.

Never Lift by the Tail!

A rat's tail skin can strip off ('deglove') if grabbed! Always scoop rats up with two hands supporting their chest and back feet.

Zero Scented Candles or Pine

Because rats live close to the bedding, skip scented room sprays, incense, cedar, and dusty litters. Wash fleece hammocks every 3–4 days with fragrance-free detergent.

12–16" Wheel If You Use One

Most rats prefer climbing and free-roam play over wheels — if you do offer a wheel, it must be a huge **14–16" solid wheel** so their long tail and spine never curve.

Dumbo vs. Standard Ear Fancy Rats: 'Dumbo' rats aren't a different species — they just have adorable low-set, round ears! They share the exact same sweet personality, lifespan, and care needs as standard top-eared Fancy Rats.

BACK COVER • TAKE THIS TO THE AISLE

Grab-and-Go Setup Checklist

MULTI-TIER WIRE CAGE & BEDDING

- [ ] Midwest Critter Nation or Large Multi-Level Cage (1/2" Bar Spacing!)
- [ ] Carefresh / Clean & Cozy Paper Bedding or Fleece Shelf Liners
- [ ] Corner Litter Pan + Unscented Paper Pellet Litter
- [ ] 2–3 Washable Fleece Hammocks + Hanging Space Pod / Igloo

CLIMBING, CHEWS & FORAGING

- [ ] Lava Ledges (for climbing & natural nail filing!)
- [ ] Cotton Rope Bridges, Wood Ladders & Cardboard Tunnels
- [ ] Applewood Chews, Willow Balls & Foraging Puzzle Toys

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

- [ ] Oxbow Essentials Adult Rat (Regal Rat) or Mazuri Rat Blocks
- [ ] 2 Lixit Glass or Stainless Ball-Bearing Water Bottles
- [ ] Heavy Ceramic Food Bowl (or Lock-On Stainless Dish)

MY RATS' INFO & FEEDING LOG

Name / Morph: _____

Gotcha Date & Weight: _____

Current Diet & Daily Routine: _____

Critter Cabana & Cascade Pet Supply

Questions about habitat setup, nutrition, or bonding? Stop by or call our animal care team anytime — we're here for the full 2–3 year commitment!

CRITTER CABANA & CASCADE PET SUPPLY • CARE GUIDE

Fancy / Dumbo Rat

Rattus norvegicus domestica



The Quick Version: Domestic Fancy and Dumbo Rats are the 'pocket puppies' of the small animal world — they learn their names, come when called, ride on your shoulder, and brux (chatter their teeth softly) when happy! Two golden rules keep them healthy: **always keep rats in same-sex pairs or trios (2+)** and house them in a **well-ventilated multi-level wire cage (never a glass aquarium!)**.

QUICK VITAL STATS AT-A-GLANCE

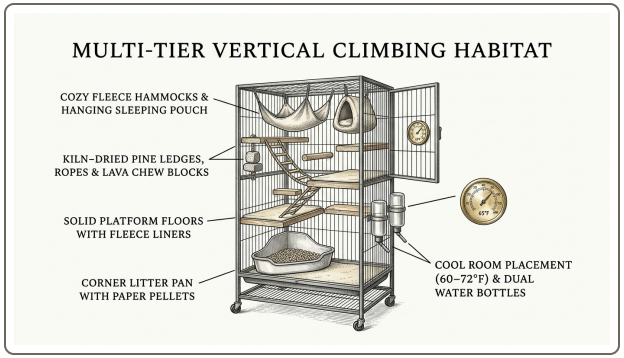
LIFESPAN **2–3 Years**	ADULT SIZE **9–11" (+ 7–9" Tail)**
SOCIAL RULE **Must Live in Pairs (2+)**	MIN CAGE SIZE **Midwest Critter Nation / 24×24×24"+**
BAR SPACING **1/2" Max (No Glass Tanks!)**	

OPEN FOR TANK SETUP, TEMPS, FEEDING & SHOPPING LIST →

STEP 1 • HABITAT & CLIMATE

Multi-Tier Wire Cage, Hammocks & Airflow Setup

1/2" Bar Spacing Wire Cage for Maximum Airflow • Cover Any Wire Ramps/Floors!



Ideal Room Temp
Rats overheat easily — keep away from sunny windows
65°–75°F

Zero Glass Tanks!
Trapped ammonia inside glass tanks causes chronic lung disease
Wire Cage Only

Indoor Humidity
45–60% RH helps keep delicate airways clear
45–60% RH

Bedding Choice
99% dust-free paper bedding or kiln-dried aspen / fleece
Zero Dust/Pine

Social Group
2–4 same-sex rats (Boys = cuddly • Girls = playful explorers)
2+ Same Sex

Thermostat & Gauge Rule: Stick-on dial gauges can be off by 10°F+! Use a digital probe thermometer/hygrometer and always plug heating mats and heat emitters into a **digital thermostat**.

STEP 2 • STOCKED STORE OPTIONS

Two Ways That Work

Pick Option A or Option B Based on Your Home Setup

Enclosure: Multi-Tier Wire Cage (1/2" Bar Spacing) vs. Glass Aquariums

Critical Respiratory Rule: Rats carry natural respiratory flora that flares up instantly if ammonia builds up in stagnant air:

OPTION A: MIDWEST CRITTER NATION OR MULTI-TIER POWDER-COATED CAGE (OUR TOP PICK!)
Full-width front doors, 1/2" horizontal bar spacing for climbing (even babies and petite females can't squeeze through 1/2" bars!), and 360° cross-ventilation.

OPTION B: SOLID PLATFORMS & COVERED RAMPS (PREVENT BUMBLEFOOT!)
Never leave bare wire mesh floors or wire-rung ramps exposed — clip washable fleece liners or plastic tray covers over shelves so toes and heels stay safe.

Cluttered Canopy: Hammocks, Sputniks & Corner Litter Pans

Rats love sleeping piled on top of each other high up in the cage canopy:

OPTION A: FLEECE DOUBLE-DECKER HAMMOCKS, ROPE BRIDGES & LAVA LEDGES
Pack the upper half of the cage with washable fleece hammocks, hanging cubes, thick cotton climbing ropes, and pumice lava ledges (which trim nails as they climb!).

OPTION B: CORNER LITTER PAN + DIG BOX ENRICHMENT
Rats easily learn to poop in a corner litter pan filled with paper pellets — just place a smooth river rock ('pee rock') in the middle of the pan!

Same-Sex Pairs: Cuddly Males vs. Energetic Females

A single rat kept alone becomes depressed, fearful, and prone to illness — two rats are no more work than one:

OPTION A: PAIR OR TRIO OF BROTHERS (THE ULTIMATE LAP POTATOES)
Adult male rats grow larger, mellow out into total couch potatoes, and love snoozing in your hoodie pocket while getting ear scratches.

OPTION B: PAIR OR TRIO OF SISTERS (ACROBATIC TRICK LEARNERS)
Females stay smaller, smell slightly less musky, and love learning agility tricks, pea-fishing in a shallow water dish, and exploring mazes!

STEP 3 • DIET & NUTRITION

Complete Lab Block Diet + Healthy Table-Food Treats

80% Oxbow Regal Rat / Mazuri Lab Blocks + 20% Fresh Veggies, Grains & Foraging Puzzles!

80% Staple
Daily Measured

Oxbow Essentials Regal Rat or Mazuri Rat & Mouse Lab Blocks: Uniform lab blocks stop rats from picking out only fatty sunflower seeds and leaving the vitamins behind!

20% Fresh Mix
Daily Small Bowl

Peas, Broccoli, Kale, Cooked Pasta/Rice, Berries & Lean Protein: Rats love 'pea fishing' — drop frozen peas into a shallow dish of warm water on hot summer days!

Young / Seniors
Life-Stage Care

Growing Babies (<4 mo): Add extra protein (cooked egg, mealworms). **Seniors (2+ yrs):** Lower protein slightly to protect aging kidneys and add low-step ramps.

Favorite Rat Foraging Games & Foods to Avoid:

- **Pea Fishing & Puzzles:** Hide cheerios/seeds inside folded toilet paper tubes or puzzle toys
- **Why Red 'Tears'?:** Red crust around nose/eyes isn't blood — it's porphyrin, a sign of stress or URI!
- **Skip Sticky Foods:** Thick peanut butter can choke a rat (they cannot gag or vomit!)
- **Never Feed:** Raw dry beans, green potato skin, onion, citrus peel (for males), or carbonated drinks

First-Week Rule: Give your new Fancy / Dumbo Rat **5 to 7 days of peace and quiet** with fresh food, hay, and water right away! Speak softly by the cage and offer hand-fed treats so they quickly learn your hands mean good things.