

Rat Medical Cheat Sheet

(A quick guide for those having to care for rats in the event of a community disaster or emergency)

Rat and Mouse Club of America rmca.org

Rat Guide ratguide.com

Eadie's House

WATER - Make available fresh water daily or an adequate supply of fruits that are juicy to keep rat hydrated. A bottle system is preferred over bowls to ensure water stays clean and available.

FOOD - Make available rat block food or in an emergency pet store rat and mouse mix, or if none available provide a natural-lite dog food, fresh green vegetables, and fruit.

BEDDING -

Non-commercial: non-looped thread towels, clean old shirts and t-shirts, clean old sheets, disposable white paper towels, newspaper printed with soy ink (messy, but safe!), non-chemical treated potting soil.

Commercial products: Carefresh, aspen, Yesterday's News, rabbit alfalfa pellets, Critter Country, EZ-FLUSH, Kozy Korner Ferret Litter - do not use clay-based clumping cat litters.

EXTRA - Rats are happier with somewhere to hide; small cardboard boxes, tissue boxes, tubes and pipe, clean flower pots, commercial toys will all work.

VITAL STATISTICS -

Temperature : (R) 37.7°C (99.85°F)

Respiratory rate/minute : 71-146

Heart rate/minute : 250-493

Blood pressure : 84-134 mm Hg

Daily urine output (average) : 23-33 ml

Food Intake : 5-6 gm per ea. 100 gm per day

Water Intake : 10-12 ml per 100 gm per day

Weight (male average adult) : 250-550 gm

Weight (female average adult) : 225-400 gm

RABIES - Risk is next to zero as rats are a terminal vector (they would die from the bite itself before they could pass it on).

EMERGENCY FIRST AID (in a pinch!) –

Dehydration: For rats still able to swallow, attempts should be made to syringe warm glucose solution by mouth (mix 3 teaspoons glucose powder, or honey, to 1 pint warm water). Maximum amount of fluid to offer at a time: 1ml for mice, 2ml for hamsters, 5ml for rats. Frequency: 3-5 times daily.

Overheated: Bathe rat, mouse gently in cool (not cold) water to reduce temperature gradually.

Bleeding: Apply pressure to area until bleeding ceases or is decreased enough to seek vet assistance. Minor bleeding such as torn nails apply cornstarch or baking powder if styptic not available.

Cleaning Eyes, Wounds, Abscesses: clean warm water, sterile saline solution (0.9%) when possible, or preservative-free contact lens saline may be used.

Skeletal Fractures/Sprains: If no bleeding keep in a small one level cage environment to minimize use. Provide warmth with available bedding.

HELP FOR ILL RATS –

Provide a quiet cage environment. Provide additional warmth if needed: in an emergency fill a plastic glove with warm water, wrap in cloth, and place near bedding. Change at intervals. If respiratory congestion a cool humidifier is preferred, or may improvise with heated water in a pan positioned near outside of cage (not accessible to rat tipping), with towel over cage, and pan to trap steam.

In the event of seizures: do not pick rat up during a seizure. Provide a small closed one level environment with lots of bedding to prevent injury to the animal.

PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS TO HAVE AVAILABLE –

Dexamethasone (can be given to aid in respiratory wheezing, also where inflammation and swelling due to skeletal injury or sprains).

Baytril, Doxycycline, Amoxicillin for resp. illness, can be given individually or combined. Baytril can also be given in skin infections, abscesses, or where skeletal injuries are open fractures.