

Care For A Pregnant Mouse

An owner asks for advice on how to help care for a pregnant pet mouse.

By Carol Lawton

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Q: Do pregnant female mice have to have more food and nutrients? Should I get my pregnant mouse food with more protein in it? And what fresh veggies and fruits should I feed her to help her along with her pregnancy? This wasn't planned, but I want to be responsible and help my pet mouse as much as I can.

A: All pregnant animals need extra nutritional support while they are pregnant, particularly those that are very young.

When choosing your pregnant pet mouse's diet, avoid offering food with excessive food colors and preservatives, particularly when the mouse is pregnant or nursing. The base of your mouse's diet should be lab blocks, which are large compressed pellets that are available at pet and feed stores. Supplement the lab blocks with rolled or whole oats (called groats), and small amounts of tofu, fresh vegetables and whole grain bread and cereal. My mice enjoy most veggies but seem to prefer broccoli, kale, carrots and an occasional spinach leaf. Only give small amounts at a time, and remove the remaining vegetables after 8 hours so your mouse isn't accidentally eating spoiled or moldy food.

When the babies open their eyes, increase the amount of oats, whole grain items, tofu and vegetables. The extra food helps support those rapidly growing mouse bodies and offers mom a little bit of relief.

Just a few more things to keep in mind:

1. If your female is caged with a male mouse it is essential that the male be removed before the babies are born. Male mice are wonderful fathers but your female can become pregnant again almost immediately after the birth of the litter.
2. If the female is housed with another female it's OK to leave them together. The female mice will work together to raise the litter and mom will appreciate the help.
3. To avoid any further pregnancies, separate the male mice from the females at 5 weeks old. There are several excellent websites that can help you accurately determine the sex of your little ones.