

How Not To Smell A Rat

Use these tips to conquer rat odor issues.

By Audrey Pavia

Most rodents, including rats, have issues with cage odor. The good news is that you can do a lot to keep unpleasant odors to a minimum.

Not-So-Stinky

When it comes to natural body odor, rats don't have as big a problem as a number of other small pets. In fact, rats are among the least odorous of all pet rodents.

"The majority of rats don't have much of an odor at all," said Tracey Cantessa, DVM, an exotics veterinarian at Rutherford Animal Hospital in Rutherford, N.J. "Ferrets, guinea pigs and mice tend to have a stronger odor than the average rat."

However, when it comes to cage odor, intact male rats can pose a problem.

"The urine of intact male rats can be quite strong, for marking purposes," said exotics veterinarian Byron de la Navarre, DVM, of Animal House of Chicago, Complete Veterinary Care, Inc. The result is that their cages can be harder to keep fresh.

One way to solve the problem of strong-smelling urine in an intact male rat is to neuter him, according to Cantessa. Neutering causes the rat to lose his instinct to mark his cage with urine, and also decreases the odor of the urine itself.

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