

Rat guide: A guide to health, medication use, breeding, and care of rats

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<http://ratguide.com/>



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Animal studies play an important role in the drug development process. Most regulatory agencies demand preclinical evaluation reports and toxicity profile of investigational products on animals for grant of approvals. These preclinical

data help derive the safety profile and calculate the recommended human doses of investigational products. Over the years, of all the experimental animals, rats have gained the centre stage and have been used in many experimental studies, which have added to our understanding of medicine, genetics, the effects of drugs, and other topics related to health and disease. The care and maintenance of rats is important as it could affect the outcome of a study. The “Rat Guide” is one of the information sources that deal with all aspects of rats.

The “Rat Guide” is an on-going project which began in 2000, with a collection of medical images to help rat owners become familiar with medical issues that affect rats. The site

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is hosted by KuddlyKorner4u (<http://kuddlykorner4u.com/>) in association with the Rat and Mouse Club of America (RMCA) and the Florida Rat Community for dissemination of information on health, medications, and the responsible care of rats. The website provides information under the following headings: (a) health guide, (b) care guide, (c) medication guide, and (d) breeding guide.

The health guide provides information on basic health check, clinical signs and symptoms guide, first aid supplies, quarantine of rat, rat anatomy, signs of pain, and vital statistics in rats. This section also provides information about health care in disease. For example under the heading/section 'cardiovascular', one can find relevant articles on cardiomyopathy and congestive heart failure and brief information about disease definition, clinical signs, etiology, diagnosis, treatment, nursing care, outcome, and prevention. The treatment section briefly describes the available drugs, recommended doses, pharmacology, indications, drug interactions/contraindications, adverse reactions, and other modalities.

The care guide gives information about maintenance of rats including entire husbandry needs. It also provides information about behavior of the rats.

The medication guide deals with information about the drugs used in rats. This page is linked with the RMCA (<http://www.rmca.org/>) drug chart and conversion and calculation chart. The RMCA chart displays information about medicines used for rat respiratory illness and other conditions. The conversion and calculation chart lists the various formulae used for the weight and volume conversions. The rat medication guide is very detailed and provides current information.

The breeding section describes in detail the anatomy of the rat, breeding area, breeding methods, and mating details. Along with this, one can also find details about determination of pregnancy, pregnancy weight chart, fertility problems, litter loss, ovulation changes, labor emergence, birth abnormalities, and baby development. The breeding guide also welcomes rat case histories from the rat community. The website claims that the information received will be helpful in spreading additional knowledge to rat lovers.

The website has a separate 'search the rat guide' column which takes the user directly to the web page displaying the desired information. There is a separate section on new articles and recently uploaded articles that will help the readers update their knowledge.

Although the website provides information for care and maintenance of rats, the readers are advised not to manage medical emergencies themselves but contact a veterinarian.

This website will be the most helpful for researchers and employees of animal house in order to help maintain rats. Veterinarians will also find the website useful as it offers details of the medications used for various systemic disorders of rat. Apart from being a near complete source of information on rats, this website lists a host of references that could be used by researchers.

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