

Dear adopter,

Thank you for your interest in adopting lab rats or mice. We think it's important that the animals you plan to adopt have a good life with you. You can read how you can ensure this on the website of the national Information Center for Companion Animals ([www.licg.nl/konijnen-en-knaagdieren](http://www.licg.nl/konijnen-en-knaagdieren)). Also watch our [video about disease and pain](#) and our [Prezi](#) (in Dutch) about care, behaviour and habitation of rats.

These are the main points we would like to point out:

Feature	Further explanation
<b>Health and life expectancy</b>	In the wild, rats and mice live an average of 1.5 years. In captivity, there are known examples of rats and mice that can live to be 4 to 5 years old. However, these are exceptions. We assume that the rats and mice that we offer for adoption can live to be healthy for a maximum of 2 to 2.5 years. In the laboratory the animals were kept under very hygienic conditions for the purpose of the research. As a result, they have had virtually no contact with germs. This means that they can be extra sensitive to germs after their adoption. Keep a close eye on their health. For example, weigh the animal regularly (at the same time of the day) to know whether it is maintaining its weight. Rapid weight loss, visible lumps, bristling of hairs, a hunched posture and hardly moving are indications that something is wrong. Visit a vet if necessary.
<b>Social environment</b>	Transport is a stressful event for an animal. It is therefore important that animals undergo the relocation as much as possible in the existing group, and that they also stay together afterwards. The group consists of at least 2 animals.
<b>Housing</b>	Mice and rats are playful animals. They cover great distances, climb and jump. They like to live in burrows, shielded from bright light (especially albinos!) and build nests to sleep in. They therefore need a spacious environment (this can be a spacious cage), in a place that is not too bright, with cage enrichment that meets their behavioural needs. That means: in any case a nesting box (for example a small box with two entrances), nesting material (unscented paper handkerchiefs or kitchen paper), climbing possibilities and hammocks.
<b>Nocturnal animals</b>	Mice and rats are nocturnal animals. This means that when it gets dark they are very active and make more noise. Therefore, avoid placing it in a bedroom. During the day they are quieter or they sleep in the house. You can pick them up one or more times during the day, but also give them the time to sleep.
<b>Other pets</b>	Mice and rats are prey animals for dogs and cats and other carnivorous animals. The presence of these animals can cause stress for the rodents. We therefore advise to keep the rodents in an area that the dogs and/or cats do not or hardly visit.
<b>Breeding</b>	There are more mice and rats than there are adoption sites. For that reason it is not allowed to breed with the adopted animals.

Information about the adopted animals is important to optimize the adoption procedure. We therefore ask for your cooperation in sharing information about the animals, in particular with regard to habituation, diseases and longevity. We regularly send out a survey for this. Have fun with the animals!

Wim de Leeuw  
Head of the Animal Welfare Body in Utrecht