



## HAIRLESS RAT CARE

Nakies! Gotta love those curly whiskers and warm wrinkled skin! But if you want to include one or more of these cuties in your colony, be aware: they do require special care.

**Litter:** Hairless rats do not have eyelashes as their furred cousins do. They are, therefore, more likely to get debris in their eyes. Many litter types that are suitable for furred rats are not appropriate for hairless rats.

We have received excellent feedback from foster families and adopters who use these 2 litter types:

- compressed paper pellets (example: Planet Petco paper pellet litter).
- eco bedding (example: FiberCore Small Animal ECO Bedding).

Please avoid paper-based fluff litters such as Carefresh or Kaytee products, as well as any type of wood shavings, including aspen shavings.

We have had countless instances of naked rats with 'eye infections' who did not have infections at all but rather, accumulated 'fluff' stuck in and behind their eyes. If left untreated, then infections can ensue but the root cause was the debris from the litter, NOT an eye infection. These rats frequently need to see a vet for sedation and eye flushes to remove the debris and may need ongoing eye treatment or surgical removal afterward depending on the severity of their eye irritation.

**Bedding:** Just like all rats, hairless rats love fleece, fleece, and more fleece and, just as with all rats, please avoid non flexible fabrics such as cotton sheets, clothing, towels, etc. These fabrics occasionally shed threads that may irritate your naked rat's eyes, not to mention rats can get stuck in the holes they chew, since these fabrics do not stretch. Fleece also helps keep your hairless rats warm and cozy, especially during the winter months.

**General Eyecare:** In addition to choosing an appropriate litter, you can help keep your rat's eyes clean by using a cosmetic sponge, moistened with warm water, to gently clean around the eye area. You can also use artificial tears to help clean/flush out your hairless rat's eyes. Do not rub or scrub!

**Skincare:** Hairless rats are prone to scratches, especially after a boisterous wrestling match with their friends. These minor scratches are nothing to worry about but do keep an eye on any bumps that may be abscesses in the making and require vet care. You can use a baby nail trimmer to keep rat nails trimmed and minimize scratches. Only the very tip needs to be clipped, taking care not to clip the 'quick'. If it bleeds a little, a touch of Styptic powder or cornstarch/flour will help stop the bleeding.

For dry skin or to sooth the skin, you can rub a very light coat of olive oil on your hairless rat but be sure to rub some on his cagemates otherwise they'll go nuts trying to lick the hairless which isn't fair. You might as well rub a little olive oil on all of them and then watch the resulting olive oil lick fest! You can also use dilute aloe vera juice in a spray bottle. There is no need to bathe your hairless rat any more than your furred rat.

**Toys/Accessories:** Choose your toys carefully. Avoid any that may have sharp edges which may not scratch a furred rat but may scratch your hairless rat. Also avoid wooden toys that easily splinter when chewed. One option is to use hard plastic dog chew toys (example Konga brand). They come in all shapes/sizes. There is also a fleece rope pull toy made for dogs that is safe and lint/splinter free.

**Companionship:** Rats are social animals and thrive with rat company. Hairless rats, in particular, really benefit when they are part of a colony that includes some furred friends to help maintain warmth, especially during the colder months of the year. I mean, wouldn't you like to find yourself buried in a furry, warm, rat pile?

Last but not least, keep their living quarters clean and enjoy your hairless friends!