**Fancy Mouse Profile**

**Order—Rodentia**  
**Superfamily—Muroidea**  
**Subfamily—Murinae**  
**Genus—Mus**  
**Species—musculus**  
**Weight, adult**—0.70–1.41 oz.  
**Body temperature**—97.0°F–100.0°F  
**Heart rate**—325–780 beats per minute  
**Respiratory rate**—94–163 breaths per minute  
**Breeding age, female**—50–60 days  
**Breeding age, male**—50 days  
**Estrous cycle**—4–5 days  
**Gestation**—18–21 days  
**Litter size**—4–12 pups  
**Weaning age**—21–28 days  
**Housing temperature**—60.8°F–80.6°F  
**Relative humidity**—30–70%  
**Lifespan**—1½–3+ years  
**Breeding duration**—200–400 days

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**Characteristics and Behavior**

A mouse has a somewhat pointed snout, an elongated body, a slender and sparsely haired tail, and relatively large ears. They are small, having an average birth weight of 0.02–0.07 ounces, and an adult weight of less than 2 ounces. They may reach a head and body length of three to four inches, excluding the tail. The tail can be as long as their head and body. Mice do not have prehensile tails like rats. This means they cannot grasp things or hang on with their tails. They do, however, use their tails for balance.

The original color of *Mus musculus* was agouti, a dark brown color with black hairs ticked throughout. As mice have been bred over the years, many color mutations have occurred, as well as colors derived from combining mutations. Mice also have different color patterns and coat types, including hairless.

Mice are social creatures, living contentedly in groups. Most mice get along with each other if introduced shortly after weaning. However, males fight if introduced when they are older. Too many mice housed in one area may lead to cannibalism. Mice are curious and busy animals, and need room and toys to keep occupied. Adult males are called *bucks*; adult females, *does*; and young are called *pups* or kittens.

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**Selection**

Before selecting a mouse, refer to the “Selection” section in the “Introduction to Pocket Pets” chapter.

Mice are not expensive and are easy to care for. They can live one to over three years. Choose a young mouse between three and five weeks old. Younger mice will have a more intense color of fur and shinier coats than older mice. They will also have more hair on their ears. Select mice from an environment where the mice are disease-free and not exposed to sick or diseased mice.

Mice reach sexual maturity at approximately 50 days. If mice of different sexes are housed together, be sure they are less than seven weeks old.

Decide how many mice you want, and which colors, coat patterns, and textures you would like. Mice should have a long, slim, racy body, large bold eyes, and a long head with clean lines showing breadth and length, large expressive ears, a long tapering tail, and an average length from nose to tail tip of 8–9 inches. Pet shops sell a variety of colors of mice, typically of unknown parentage. Contacting a breeder allows you to get the type of mice you want as well as its heredity information. Refer to the “Showing” section for recognized varieties of mice.

If you are just beginning, two females can make a nice pair. Females do not have the strong odor that the males do. As males mature, their odor becomes more prevalent, requiring more