



Why aquariums are unsuitable as Rat homes.

We felt that as aquariums are so widely used as Rat homes we would try to explain why they are not the best option for keeping happy healthy rodents. We have done a fair amount of research on this subject and feel that there is so much misinformation floating around nowadays that we would try and give people the correct information about housing their rodents in aquariums and the potentially fatal effects that this could have.

Rodents have very sensitive respiratory system and because of the enclosed area where there is little to no ventilation this can be dangerous to your pet. Rodents urine is high in ammonia, if you have ever smelt ammonia yourself (ammonia is normally used in cleaning products for around your house it can also be purchased as cloudy ammonia) it has a very sharp, strong smell that personally makes me gag and causes me to have trouble breathing temporarily. Ammonia is a colourless gas which occurs both naturally and is produced by human activity. Those Rats that are forced to live in environments that do not allow good ventilation (ie aquariums) have to live breathing this poisonous gas.

Ammonia is known to be poisonous, corrosive, explosive when exposed to a flame and a suspected mutagen.

([Mutagen](#): Something capable of causing a gene-change. Among the known mutagens are radiation, certain chemicals and some viruses.)

Mycoplasmosis (aka Myco) is an organism that most Rats carry (other than lab Rats) and is generally the cause of the majority of respiratory and genital illnesses in Rats. Although Myco in its dormant form is of no concern it can become a problem when an animal is stressed or living in conditions with high ammonia because of poor ventilation. If Myco is left untreated then it can become very serious especially when the animal is being exposed to high levels of ammonia due to an environment like that of an aquarium that provides very little in the way of ventilation. Even though "tank toppers" which are available in some states provide additional levels where the ventilation is better it still does not address the issue of the high amount of ammonia that builds up on the ground level of the living environment and still encourages outbreaks of Myco and secondary illnesses. "Tank toppers" are better than nothing as the Rodents can at least get higher where the ventilation is better but the ammonia smell will still damage their delicate lungs and cause illnesses that could cost your rodents their lives.

Health issues aside the aquarium homes are also difficult to add toys, additional levels and hammocks to since there is no where to attach these items making it difficult to keep your rodents physically and mentally active. Rodents are very intelligent and require stimulation to keep their minds active and to keep them happy Their health will also deteriorate when a rodent has nothing to do all day as they may start barbering themselves just for something to do.

Aquariums were at one stage promoted as ideal environments for rodents but as these "pocket pets" become more popular and respected people are starting to realise that some things are not recommended with your animals health in mind. The more research that is being done the more we as people are learning about rodent health and the diseases that effect their life spans. The rodent keeping community do not encourage the use of low ventilated homes for rodents. We see first hand the sickness that this causes and also the sadness of losing a rodent knowing their death was preventable simply by not containing them in aquariums.

If you are currently housing your rodents in an aquarium I encourage you, no I beg you to go and purchase an open cage for your rodents as this could potentially save you a lot on vet bills and save your rodents life.