

RAT CARE: AGE, SIZE, AND GROWTH



by Victoria Johnson

Rats live to be about two to three years and grow fairly quickly.

They reach their full length between six to nine months of age—females generally reaching full size more quickly than males. After six to nine months, rats may fill out a little more, but they are full grown and will not grow any longer in length.

Females tend to weigh between 200 to 500 grams (.4 to 1.1 pounds), males 400 to 700 grams (.8 to 1.5 pounds).

Myth:

If rats are kept in a smaller cage and/or in a crowded situation, they will stay smaller and if kept in a larger size cage with an appropriate number of rats, rats will grow larger and keep growing over time.

Fact:

Rats grow to adult size and stay that size. **Never** keep rats in a small and/or crowded cage in order to try and stunt their growth.

Myth:

Feeding rats every other day with only one day's portion of food given every other day is a proper feeding method to use to keep rats small.

Fact:

This is NOT an acceptable mode of feeding as rats **must** eat every day/frequently due to high metabolism (see Feeding booklet for more info). If this feeding method is being used, rats are probably going to stay small, but it will be due to malnutrition. It will also cause stress, possible physical development problems, and make rats prone to injury/illness.

