



Australian Rat Fanciers Society Inc.

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PARASITE TREATMENT

Rats can pick up external and internal parasites and skin conditions, especially if they are taken to places where they are exposed to these things but rats can pick them up from things brought into the home. Old and sick rats are particularly susceptible.

Fortunately treatment (and better still prevention) is fairly easy.

It's always a good idea to treat new rats. If you adopted from our Rescue Service then the rat will have already been treated.

Rats can suffer from mites, lice and very rarely – fleas. The treatment below covers all of these.

Mites cannot be seen with the naked eye, lice and fleas can be seen, but are very small and sometimes hard to spot, especially on dark coloured rats.

Whether or not you can see any parasites, if a rat is scratching or you notice hair loss, sores, scabs, or bumps on ears, noses, the treatment set out here should always be the first action to take.

Mites are the most common parasite seen in rats. Mites live on all animals, including humans. They are host specific, eg. a rat mite cannot live on humans or other animals. In low numbers they cause no problem. however when the hosts immune system is lowered, due to ill health or old age, mite numbers can increase. So in a colony of rats it's possible for only one rat who is old rat or in poor health to be noticeably suffering from mites.

Rats can suffer from ear mites and fur mites. Ear Mites burrow under the skin of the rat's ears, also the nose and less commonly the feet and genitals. Fur Mites live on the skin and hair follicles

Both cause extreme itching, and the rat may scratch itself raw trying to get relief.



Ear mite infestation, notice that the rats nose has also been badly affected.



Rat with wounds from scratching due to sever itching caused by fur mite infestation.

TREATING FOR PARASITES

Revolution

Using Revolution is the easiest way to treat and prevent all rat parasites and most skin conditions. Revolution is an external spot-on treatment product for dogs for cats. It's best to use as a regular precautionary treatment; every 4 weeks, especially if you take your rats out and about with you.

If the rat has a bad infestation, it's recommended to treat again after 7 - 10 days.

There are various package options. The pack for adult cats and the packs for puppies or kittens are of the same strength (concentration), it's only the amount of liquid in each vial that is different.

The packs for dogs are a higher strength – it is twice the concentration of the cat or puppy/kitten Revolution, and therefore half the volume should be used.

We recommend using the cat or puppy/kitten option. The size you choose depends on the number of rats you have. Compare the price and decide which is more economical for you.

As a general rule use one drop per rat – Don't use a whole vial! Be careful not to squeeze the vial too hard. But don't panic if you squeeze a bit too much on – this product is quite safe.

Place one drop on the back of the rat's neck – part the hair so the liquid makes contact with the skin.

Because rats groom themselves and each other, it is important that you supervise them after they have been treated to make sure they don't lick the treatment off themselves or each other. Once the liquid has dried it is safe for them to groom. This medication loses its strength once opened and exposed to the air so keep the vial airtight.

Even if only rat is showing signs of parasites, always treat all rats in your home. Deep clean the cage, change litter and wash any bedding. It's also a good idea to give your home a good vacuum.

Dosage Rates:

Use 15mg/kg. 0.05ml = (about 1drop) per 250g rat.

Puppy/kitten 0.25ml treats 5 x 250g rats per vial @ 1 drop each.

Cat 0.75ml treats 15 x 250g rats per vial @ 1 drop each.

Ivermectin

Ivermectin can also be used to treat parasites and comes in a variety of forms: oral, topical and injectable for a variety of animals. We recommend Revolution as it's much easier. Additionally, Ivermectin can sometimes be ineffective. If using Ivermectin please consult your vet about dosages.

Parasite Sprays

NEVER use parasite sprays of any kind on rats – even if the packaging states that the product is suitable for use on rats. Owners have reported bad reactions in rats and even death after treating with spray on products for lice/mites etc.

**For more information on parasites, please refer to the relevant chapter in
The Pet Rat Care Book produced by our club.**

If you need advice please contact the AusRFS – see contact details at the top of this document.