

How to Spot Abuse and Neglect in PetSmart Stores

What to Look for in All Animal Enclosures

- Animals should have adequate living space and adequate and clean food and water.
- Animals should have clean, dry bedding free of excessive urine or feces.
- Animals should be separated by sex and species.

What to Look for in Bird Enclosures

- A bird's feet should go at least three-quarters of the way around the available perches; otherwise, the perches are improperly sized and can cause foot problems.
- Birds' food bowls should not be placed underneath perches. Otherwise, it's inevitable that excrement will drop into the food, which can make birds sick.
- Check to see if any of the birds look sick. Some common signs are resting on the bottom of the cage (not on a perch), labored breathing, and rocking back-and-forth.
- Cages should be clean. Birds have very sensitive respiratory systems, so it's important that their living environment be sanitary.

What to Look for in Fish Enclosures

- Tanks should be filled with clear, odorless water and free of algae.
- Tanks should not be crowded and should not contain both healthy and sick or dead fish.
- Symptoms of sick fish include gulping air from the water's surface, motionlessness, swimming upside-down, and white, cotton-like spots on the body.

What to Look for in Hamster and Gerbil Enclosures

- Enclosures should not contain both healthy and sick or dead animals.
- Symptoms of sick hamsters and gerbils include open wounds, continuous sneezing, a runny nose or runny eyes, diarrhea, and a head tilt or trouble balancing.

What to Look for in Rat and Mouse Enclosures

- Enclosures should not be crowded—more than two to four animals in a 10- to 15-gallon enclosure will cause hair loss and fighting, leading to wounds—and should be out of direct sunlight and not exposed to drafts.
- Symptoms of sick rats and mice include open wounds, a runny nose or runny eyes, diarrhea, bleeding from the nose or mouth, rough or scaly tails, frequent scratching, listlessness, and a bloated belly.

What to Look for in Iguana Enclosures

- Each iguana should be housed alone in a tank at least one-and-a-half times the animal's length and at least as wide as the iguana is long.
- Light must be provided for each iguana for 12 to 14 hours every day.
- Iguanas can die from eating other animals—there should not be mealworms or crickets in an iguana's food bowl. Have them removed if you see them there.
- Symptoms of a sick iguana include loose or dull skin, mucus around the mouth or nose, a skinny tail base, jaws that don't meet exactly, and lying on the bottom of the tank.

What to Look for in Turtle Enclosures

- It is illegal to sell a turtle whose shell is less than 4 inches long.
- Tortoises and semi-aquatic turtles must have a dry area and a container of fresh water large enough for the animal to sit in.
- Aquatic turtles must have a basking area large enough to allow the animal to leave the water and be completely dry.
- Symptoms of a sick turtle include a shell that is peeling, cracking, or covered with growths, bruises, or soft spots; limbs or a head that is swollen, discolored, or covered with a growth; puffy or shut eyes; labored breathing; or a runny nose.