

Abstract

Neophobia (fear of novelty) is first protection from ingesting potentially dangerous food in rodents. After overcoming the fear an animal begins to sample the food (take small parts). The animal then forms an aversion to dangerous food and preference for safe and nutritionally favourable food on the grounds of its experience with its ingestion. These mechanisms of behaviour towards food can be learned individually but an individual's behaviour is also influenced by other animals, especially in social animals. Whether an individual will act on its own experiences and therefore learn or if it will learn from others, depends on the situation and the environment in which the animal currently is.

Key words: food neophobia, food preferences, social learning, individual learning, Rodentia, *Rattus*