

GUINEA PIGS



Scientific name: Cavia porcellus

For Ages: 8 & up, with adult supervision

Pet lifespan: 5 - 8 (depending on breed)

Pet Size: Approximately 18 - 31cm long

Nutrition

Staple diet: Choose a fortified diet, made especially for guinea pigs.

Vegetables: Treat your guinea pig to small amounts (approximately 1/8 cup) of carrots and dark green leafy vegetables like collard greens, kale or mustard greens daily. Take care not to overfeed these fresh foods. They have high moisture content and too much can cause diarrhea.

Fruit: Vitamin C rich fruits like sliced kiwi and oranges are tasty and nutritious treats. Give one or two tablespoons every other day.

Hay: Offer a handful of timothy hay every day to add needed fiber to your guinea pigs diet.

Treats sticks & chews: These hard and crunchy treats keep your guinea pigs front teeth trimmed – always keep one in their habitat.

Water: Change and fill your guinea pigs water bottle with clean water every day.

**Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to avoid spoilage. Treats should be less than 10% of total food intake.*

Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new guinea pig stay healthy and happy:

- Home: Appropriate size and type of cage
- Aspen or other appropriate bedding
- Water bottle
- Food bowls
- Hiding house
- Fortified guinea pig diet
- Timothy hay or hay cubes
- Appropriate fresh fruits and veggies
- Vitamin C drops
- Treat sticks and chews
- Mineral wheel Toys
- Tennis balls
- Ping pong balls
- Small stuffed animal Extras
- Books and magazines
- Hay holder
- Cage cleaner and disinfectant (Read and follow label instructions)

Habitat

Housing: Guinea pigs need a wellventilated home with a solid floor, large enough for a food dish, water bottle and a hiding area (if one isn't built in). There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for them to move around freely.

Bedding: Line the home with 5 - 8cm of bedding, and change it weekly or more often if needed.

Cage placement: Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight.

Traits & Behavior

Social: Guinea pigs are gentle, social and will enjoy the companionship of another guinea pig (if you have two, house only same gender pairs), as well as interaction with their owners.

Affectionate: Although shy at first, guinea pigs will develop intense affection for their owners and may whistle to signal their happiness.

Diurnal: This means that guinea pigs are most active during the day. They will sleep about 4 - 6 hours per night.

Health

Signs of a healthy guinea pig:

- Clean, bright eyes
- Soft fur
- Full, slightly-rounded body (but not too fat)
- Eats and drinks normally
- Well-formed droppings with no diarrhea

Things to watch for:

- Overgrown front teeth
- Bare patches in the fur
- Lethargic behavior; seizures or tremors
- Weight loss; not eating or drinking normally
- Diarrhea
- Sneezing; discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth

Things to remember

Lifting & Handling: Handle your guinea pig gently. Place one hand under their shoulders with your thumb over and around the neck, use your other hand to support under their back end, and hold firmly but not tightly.

Vitamin C: Guinea pigs cannot store or manufacture vitamin C, so you'll need to add a supplement to their water daily.

Special needs: Your guinea pigs front teeth never stop growing, so they need lots of healthy things to chew on like treat sticks and chews.

Safety & Cleanliness: Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning their home. Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at a greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

Tip: Guinea pigs are unable to judge height and distances accurately and should therefore never be left on a bed or table without supervision.



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