

## Food and Water

Your Guinea Pig should have a constant supply of food and water. Purchase food and treats specifically made for Guinea Pigs. Guinea Pigs are natural foragers, so hide a little food around the cage for him to find. In order to obtain crude fiber for proper digestion, your guinea pig should be fed an unlimited supply of low calcium/protein grass hays such as orchard or timothy-grass.

Guinea Pigs cannot manufacture Vitamin C, so purchase Vitamin C drops made specifically for Guinea Pigs, and add to their water supply every day. Follow the dosage instructions, and be aware that the drops are light sensitive and lose 50% of the effectiveness within 24 hours. In addition, you can add sources of this essential vitamin to their daily diet with mustard greens, kale, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and oranges and lemons (including the peels).

For ease in administering vitamins, and hygienic reasons, provide fresh water daily using a Ball-Tip Water Bottle.

A mineral or flavored salt spool provides your Guinea Pig with additional, necessary minerals. To help develop a lustrous and healthy coat, a skin and coat conditioning oil in the form of a food supplement can be added once a week to their food for short-haired Guinea Pigs, and twice a week for Peruvian and Abyssinian Guinea Pigs.

# Caring for Your Guinea Pig



*The information provided is not intended to replace your veterinarian or local Guinea Pig expert. There are several excellent books and online resources available which provide more in-depth information on Guinea Pigs and their care.*

## Enjoy Your New Pet!

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## About Guinea Pigs

Guinea Pigs are very popular pets. They are naturally clean, hardy, and are excellent first pets for children. Although they may be nervous at first, they become used to being handled, as long as it is done gently.

There are several varieties of guinea pigs and whether you have chosen a Silky, Teddy Bear, Short-haired, Peruvian or Abyssinian, your new pet will become a valuable and entertaining member of your family.

When you bring your guinea pig home, set up his new home before you take him out of his carrying box. After placing him into his new home, allow him a few quiet days before handling him.

Begin by offering him a treat such as a fresh carrot stick. He will smell it and then begin to nibble or grasp it. Always talk to him in a gentle voice and soon you will be petting his head, back, and ears.

## Housing/Environment

When selecting a home for your Guinea Pig, choose a spacious wire cage with a deep plastic base for easy cleaning. Because Guinea Pigs cannot tolerate high levels of humidity, avoid getting a glass aquarium enclosure. A wire cage provides the ventilation required by your Guinea Pig. The temperature should be on the cooler side, around 65 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Be sure to position the cage

out of direct sunlight. A solid floor is optimal.

Guinea Pigs are more active in the evening and, therefore, require adequate rest periods during the day. Locate their cage in a quiet area, free from excessive noise and commotion.

## What Else Do I Need?

**Accessories.** Providing places to hide within their cage gives Guinea Pigs a sense of security and alleviates stress. There are several types of Guinea Pig accessories that will accomplish this goal. You may also use an upside down cardboard box, but these may absorb moisture or be more difficult to clean than a purchased accessory. Guinea Pigs love to play and forage. Make sure to include items to keep them entertained.

**Chew Toys.** A Guinea Pig's teeth never stop growing. Provide chew toys specifically made for Guinea Pigs to help grind their teeth and keep them healthy.

**Feeders.** A bin feeder attached to the side of the cage provides a contamination free method of feeding. A hanging hay manger eliminates soiled and wasted hay. There are many types of hanging or swinging food holders that provide a hygienic way to dispense food. These food holders can provide hours of entertainment and activity for your pet.

**Bedding.** If using a solid floor, a generous amount of absorbent, dust-free bedding should be used to line the floor,

along with a pile of timothy-grass or hay. Replace the bedding frequently to maintain a clean and odor-free environment.

## Handling

The best way to pick up your new Guinea Pig is to approach on its level and begin talking to it. Let it come to you, presenting the back of your hand for it to smell. Gently place your hand across its shoulders with your thumb behind one side of its front legs. Gently lift the Guinea Pig and place your other hand under its body to support its weight. Hold it on your lap, or close to your chest if you are then standing up.

## Grooming

The first step in grooming your Guinea Pigs is establishing a relationship. Your pet needs to trust you, and allow you to touch and hold him. Start by offering your pet treats from your hand while talking softly, and then pet him until he's comfortable letting you hold him. You don't need to worry, Guinea Pigs rarely, if ever, bite.

Once you have established this relationship, purchase a specially designed small animal brush. Use the brush daily, even if you are just using the brush to pet your Guinea Pig, to establish the grooming routine. You will also need to purchase a nail trimmer designed for small animals, and antiseptic blood stopper.