

Care & Information Sheet

Guinea Pig



The Guinea Pig is a social companion animal and will require daily interaction and care. They are easy to handle but prefer a routine with similar times for playing, feeding and resting each day. They communicate by making different sounds which have various meanings. Guinea Pigs will jump around when they are happy. They like to hide in objects, but will come out when people are near by. With proper care and nutrition guinea pigs can live up to 8 years. The average size is 8-11 inches.

Habitat

- A large escape proof habitat with lots of room to jump, play and exercise is recommended.
- Provide a wire habitat at least 30"x15"x15" with a solid bottom to protect their feet and a place for them to hide.
- They will do well in the average household temperature, not to exceed 80°F. Avoid extreme temperature changes and you should never keep their habitat in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.
- Clean the habitat and its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water, rinse, and allow to dry completely before placing the guinea pig back into the habitat.
- Exercise wheels and plastic balls may cause injury to guinea pigs and should be used with caution. Remove chewed toys immediately to prevent internal harm.

Bedding

- 1–2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat.
- Proper bedding includes hardwood shavings and a pelleted or recycled product.
- Cedar-based products are not recommended as they may cause harm to your new pet.
- Wet bedding should be removed daily. Provide all new bedding once a week.

Food & Water

- High-quality guinea pig food.
- Provide timothy hay at all times.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.
- Do not feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions.
- Fruits & vegetables can be offered daily but should be discarded if not consumed within 24 hrs.
- Guinea Pigs require 30–50 mg of vitamin C daily from vitamin supplements, parsley or washed citrus fruits.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water changed daily.

Grooming and Hygiene

- Guinea Pigs stay clean and rarely need baths but can be spot cleaned with a damp washcloth if necessary.
- Fur may be brushed with a soft small animal brush.

Supplies

Habitat	Water Bottle	Timothy Hay
Bedding	Food Dish	Chew Sticks
Toys	Quality Food	Book about Guinea Pigs
Hiding Place	Vitamin C	

Health

Because all guinea pigs are potential carriers of infectious diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your guinea pig and/or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases.

You should consult with an exotic animal veterinarian if you observe any of the following conditions.

- Diarrhea or loose stools - caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing, or other illness.
- Scurvy - A disease caused by vitamin C deficiency resulting in poor appetite, sore joints and chest, and bleeding from the gums. If untreated it can be fatal.
- Malocclusion - Overgrown teeth which may need to be trimmed regularly.
- Mites - External parasites that cause the guinea pig to lose patches of hair.
- Ringworm - Skin infection caused by a fungus.

For information regarding guinea pigs and disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

NOTE: The information contained in this document is for general reference only. Please consult a veterinarian for medical advice and concerns.

Sources: Guinea Pigs in Your Life by Critter Press
The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care by David L. Carroll