



ADOPTION RESOURCES

FOR YOUR NEW GUINEA PIG

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Congratulations on Your Guinea Pig Adoption!



THE BASICS

Food: Provide plenty of high-quality hay, like timothy or orchard grass, to help keep their digestive tracts running smoothly. Supplement your guinea pig's diet with fresh foods like carrots, any kind of fruit, dark green lettuce, cucumbers, dark green vegetables, sprouts, and corn. These items will serve as an additional source of vitamin C and/or other nutrients.

Guinea pigs cannot manufacture their own vitamin C, so using a commercial guinea pig food enriched with vitamin C will provide them with what they need. Do not use vitamin C drops for water, as they can make the water taste bitter and discourage your pig from drinking.

Always introduce new foods slowly and in small amounts to reduce the risk of diarrhea. Use a heavy crockery bowl that can't be tipped over and is easy to clean.

For more information on foods that are safe for guinea pigs, we recommend talking to your veterinarian.

Water: Keep fresh water available in a suspended "licker" water bottle. Your guinea pig should have access to fresh water at all times.

Housing: For 1-2 guinea pigs the cage should be no smaller than 7.5 square feet (30" x 36"); for 2 the ideal size is 10.5 square feet (30" x 50"). If you plan to have more than 2, add on 1-2 more square feet of space for each additional guinea pig.

Cages with mesh or wire flooring can be harmful to your guinea pig's feet. You'll also want to provide your guinea pig with a wooden "house," tunnels to crawl through, and platforms to climb on. When choosing floor linings and cage furnishings, keep in mind that guinea pigs will chew on just about anything, so everything placed in the cage must be nontoxic. Use plenty of lining material like shredded newspaper, or commercial nesting materials available at pet supply stores.

DO NOT use materials such as sawdust, cedar chips, or corn cob as they may cause respiratory, digestive, or other serious health problems! To provide your guinea pig with a clean environment, be sure to clean their cage at least three to four times a week.

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Tips for a Healthy Guinea Pig



KEEPING YOUR GUINEA PIG HEALTHY

A well-cared-for guinea pig may live four to eight years.

Male guinea pigs can weigh between one to two-and-a-half pounds, females slightly less. Guinea pigs are sexually mature between four and eight weeks of age.

Guinea pigs groom themselves with their front teeth, tongue, and back claws, but they still require frequent brushing and the occasional bath to stay clean and tangle-free, particularly the long-haired breeds. Use a soft baby brush or toothbrush for brushing.

Because your guinea pig's teeth grow continuously, it's essential that you provide them with plenty of timothy grass hay at all times, in addition to their regular food.

The chewing and biting of this hay and their food should be enough to keep their teeth from overgrowing.

Your guinea pig's nails can also overgrow, causing discomfort and increasing your risk of being scratched. Ask your veterinarian to show you how to trim them.



TYPICAL GUINEA PIG BEHAVIOR

Guinea pigs are social creatures and enjoy the company of other animals, especially other guinea pigs. It is easiest to pair two babies or one baby and one adult, but pairing two adults can still be done successfully.

A good way to go about introducing your guinea pigs is to start on neutral territory and monitor their behavior for at least an hour. If they do well with each other, then try placing them in a freshly cleaned large cage (that is to be their new home), and monitor them in the cage for at least an hour. If your guinea pigs are not getting along, stay calm and separate them with a towel to avoid being bit.

Guinea pigs have a keen sense of sight. They also have the ability to recognize all the colors of the spectrum. Their hearing is even better than their vision, and they can quickly learn to respond to a specific sound.