



# ADOPTION RESOURCES FOR YOUR NEW HAMSTER

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# Congratulations on Your Hamster Adoption

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## THE BASICS

**Food:** Commercial hamster food will provide your hamster with a balanced diet and is available at pet supply stores. You can supplement your hamster's diet with fresh foods like sunflower seeds, nuts (NO almonds though), dark green lettuce, most fruits and vegetables, rolled oats, cottage cheese, and plain low-fat yogurt. Introduce new foods slowly and in small amounts to reduce the risk of diarrhea. Use a sturdy crockery bowl that can't be tipped over and is easy to clean.

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

**Housing:** Hamsters need a cage that's at least 24 inches long by 14 inches wide by 12 inches high. A cage with a high plastic bottom to keep the litter in, and horizontal metal bars for climbing works best. Cage bars should be no wider than one-half inch to prevent your hamster from escaping. Hamsters are burrowing animals by nature and prefer a solid floor covered with shredded newspaper or commercial nesting material. Avoid cedar shavings though, which could irritate your hamster's respiratory system.

Be sure to place the cage out of drafts and direct sunlight. Hamsters will hibernate if they get too cold. Make sure your cage closes securely or your aquarium has a tight-fitting screen cover.

Provide a box for sleeping with plenty of nesting material, like unscented tissues or paper bedding.

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# General Hamster Information



## KEEPING YOUR HAMSTER HEALTHY

Hamsters live an average of two years.

For exercise, provide your hamster with a solid wheel and/or a plastic ball to run around in. Be sure to supervise your hamster while they are in the exercise ball.

Provide plenty of chewing blocks, otherwise your hamster's teeth can become overgrown.



## TYPICAL HAMSTER BEHAVIOR

When picking up your hamster, approach slowly and be careful not to startle them. Curl one hand over their body, with your fingers and thumb around their abdomen. Hold them securely, but don't squeeze.

To carry your hamster, place the other hand under their legs. The more you handle your hamster, the friendlier and tamer they will be.

Hamsters are solitary animals. Trying to introduce a second hamster into a cage could result in serious injury. Occasionally, littermates that have never been separated can remain together, but you'll need to constantly monitor their interactions. You'll want to make sure they're the same sex to prevent unwanted litters.

Hamsters have very keen hearing, but poor eyesight, and rely heavily on their sense of smell. Because of their poor vision, be careful about placing them on any high surface unsupervised, as they may walk off the edge.