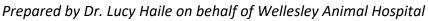
Chinchilla Care Guide



HOUSING

Cages:

- Avoid wire bottom cages as these can cause injuries as feet can get caught the wire mesh
- Avoid aquariums or plastic containers as they don't allow for good ventilation.
- Chinchillas are very active and multi-level cages can allow them to jump and climb.
- Try to find a cage with a removable bottom pan to make cleaning easy
- Provide branches and climbing areas to allow your chinchilla to exercise and move about the cage
- Provide nest boxes within the cage
- Ensure the cage is in a cool, dry location with good ventilation as chinchillas do not do well with high humidity or high heat.

Bedding:

- Always use unscented bedding and avoid cedar and pine shavings strongly smelling bedding can cause irritation to the nose and lungs and contribute to respiratory disease.
- CareFresh or recycled newspaper beddings (eg Yesterday's News) are recommended as they are good absorbable unscented materials.
- Ensure to clean the bedding regularly spot clean daily and change all the bedding 1-2 times a week.

Dust Baths:

- Chinchillas require dust baths to keep their fur in good condition, removing oil and dirt from the fur.
- Provide commercial chinchilla dust for 15-20mins daily or several times a week. Excessive use may lead to eye problems so don't leave the dust bath in the cage at all times.

NUTRITION

Always ensure fresh water is available, most chinchillas will learn to drink from a water bottle.

Hay

- 75-80% of the diet should be good quality hay as this helps regulate their digestive system and helps prevent dental diseases.
- Ensure hay is always readily available.
- Timothy hay is recommended however other alternatives include orchard grass and oat hays if your chinchilla won't eat timothy hay.
- Always ensure your hay is fresh and free from mold.

Pellets

- Chinchilla pellets provide a balance of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Avoid pellets that are sold as "mixes" containing seeds, fruits or nuts your chinchilla will pick out their favorite food and often not obtain the balanced diet they need. They can also be too high in fats leading to excessive weight gain
- Use a timothy hay based pellet
- Feed 1-2 tablespoons of pellets per day for an adult chinchilla.





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Treats

- Fresh vegetables can be used as treats and should make up less than 10% of the daily diet
- Introduce new vegetables slowly and one at a time to your chinchilla to prevent diarrhea.
- Dried and fresh fruits can also be given in small amounts

BEHAVIOR

- Chinchillas may fight if housed together
- Occasionally they can be kept successfully in pairs, single sex groups or one male with several females but be sure to monitor closely for signs of fighting
- If opposite sexes are housed together we would recommend castrating the males to prevent unwanted breeding.

HEALTH CARE

- Chinchillas by nature hide symptoms and signs of illnesses making early detection of disease difficult
- New patient exams and yearly examinations are therefore strongly recommended to help your chinchilla live a long and happy life
- If you notice any changes to your chinchilla's behavior, appetite or bowel movements we would recommend contacting your veterinarian immediately