



GUINEA PIG CARE SHEET



Congratulations on your new addition to your family. With the proper care and attention your new guinea pig will make a wonderful, loving pet.

Food Guide for Guinea Pigs

Guinea pigs need to have access to fresh food and water **EVERY DAY**. Old vegetable and food scraps should be removed also. It is important to provide a diet for your pet guinea pig that is high in protein, fibre and Vitamin C. Guinea Pigs require both pellet form food to wear down their continuously growing teeth and a chaff form for roughage. Chaff Meal mixes are a good source of roughage along with a good supply of grass hay/straw. Guinea pigs are unable to produce and store Vitamin C in their body, hence Vitamin C is a dietary essential and must be provided on a daily basis. This can be achieved through providing fruit, vegetables and a vitamin supplement to their diet (**Recommend Aristopet Small Animal Vitamin Drops**). Guinea pigs also love eating fresh grass (**mowed grass will make them sick**), which is great for their digestive and dental health.

Your guinea pig has been eating a Guinea Pig **Specific** Pellet Food - (Recommend VETAFARM pellets), Hay, Apple, Carrot and Kale. You can give your guinea pig a variety of fruit & vegetables in small amounts, along with hay, pellets and grass. (Too much fruit can lead to gastrointestinal issues). For extra roughage, you may also want to introduce a Chaff Meal Mix. It is important that guinea pigs are introduced to a variety of different and healthy foods from a young age, as they may not try or accept new foods later in life. You can introduce small amounts of any of the below safe foods your guinea pig's diet.

ALWAYS MAKE SURE YOUR GUINEA PIG HAS FRESH WATER AVAILABLE

Foods Safe for Guinea Pigs

Apples	Carrots	Kale	Capsicum	Cauliflower
Blueberries	Spinach	Silver Beat	Beetroot	Cherries
Cantaloupe	Banana	Mango	Pumpkin	Green Beans
Oranges	Peach	Pear	Pineapple	Broccoli (Stem & Flower)
Parsley	Raisins	Asian Greens	Strawberries	Zucchini

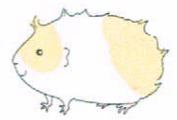
Foods Guinea Pigs To Avoid

Avocado	Corn	Grains	Peas
Potatoes	Nuts	Seeds	Iceberg Lettuce
Lima Beans	Kidney Beans	Soy Beans	Apple Seeds

Lucerne (alfalfa) and Clover hay should NOT be fed to Guinea Pigs, as these are too high in protein and calcium.

Human foods such as breads, biscuits, sweets, sugar, breakfast cereals, dairy products, chocolate, pasta, crackers or pickled foods.

General Care



*Enclosure size - **Minimum size** 1m x 0.5m (For 1 Guinea Pig) – The more space the better!

*Enclosures need to be cleaned at least once a week to prevent bacteria build up.

*Guinea pigs are social animals and are better kept in pairs or groups of the same sex to avoid having any unintended litters of baby guinea pigs. When introducing 2 boars (males) together for the first time it is best to introduce either 2 young boars or a young boar with an older boar. (Desexing is recommended).

*Make sure your guinea pig has access to cool areas and shade on the hot days. You can try freezing a water bottle and put it in with the guinea pig on a hot day. During Winter, make sure your guinea pig is kept as well out of the cold weather elements as possible.

*Guinea pigs need protection from foxes, cats, dogs etc. so make sure they are kept secure.

*If you intend to keep your guinea pig indoors, do not leave he/she out of their hutch unsupervised. Guinea pigs are attracted to electrical cords, etc.

*Guinea pigs love hidey holes and to forage, so it is important to provide environmental enrichment, mental stimulation and exercise. Enrichment can be provided in the form of plastic tunnels/pipes, hide away igloos, cardboard houses and toys may provide hours of entertainment for your guinea pig each day. Hiding food around their enclosure to find and toys that hide treats are also great for enrichment.

*As Guinea pigs teeth constantly grow, wooden gnaw toys are great to help with the prevention of overgrown teeth. Mineral treats are also used for this purpose. Never give your guinea pig treated pine wood or other chemically treated woods to chew as these can kill them.

*There are no vaccinations available for guinea pigs in Australia, and as such, guinea pigs do not require annual vaccinations.

*Guinea pigs should be **wormed every 3 months**, we recommend the **Aristopet Small Animal Wormer** drops.

*Children should always be supervised when handling guinea pigs; they are not toys and need to be **gently** handled.

Health Problems

Many of the common health problems seen in pet guinea pigs are preventable by good husbandry and feeding practices. The following are some of the common husbandry-related problems seen in guinea pigs:

*Dental disease is very common in guinea pigs, often due to a lack of roughage that guinea pigs could chew and wear down their constantly growing teeth. Dental disease can be very painful and cause your guinea pigs to be unable to eat, lose weight and become ill. Guinea pigs should have constant access to good quality hay.

*Guinea pigs may be susceptible to respiratory infections, often due to poor housing conditions, including inadequate ventilation, poor hygiene and dusty inappropriate bedding.

Foot inflammation and infections (this is called pododermatitis) can be caused by inappropriate flooring and bedding. Poor hygiene can also lead to foot and skin problems.

*Guinea pigs are susceptible to external parasites like fleas and mites (these can cause intense itchiness, hairloss and discomfort). We recommend **Aristopet Small Animal Mite & Mange spray** for treatment of infestations.

*Urinary tract problems such as inflammation, infection and bladder stones are also common in guinea pigs: these are often related to poor diet and poor hygiene.

*Vitamin C deficiency is common if a guinea pig's diet is inadequate. This can be prevented by feeding fresh foods rich in Vitamin C daily or adding a vitamin supplement to their diet.

*Dehydration and heat stress: making sure that your guinea pig has fresh clean water and that they are kept somewhere where they will not overheat will prevent this.

Always seek vet attention if symptoms/condition persist. For more information/facts on guinea pigs you can research online.