

# Guinea Pig



## THE BASICS

Common Name	Guinea Pig
Scientific Name	Cavia porcellus
Size	Varies by breed
Life span	4 - 8 years
Sexual Maturity	Females: 3-4 months Males: 2 months
Gestation	59 - 72 days
Litter size	3 - 4
Weaned	4 - 6 weeks old

## Essential Items

- Enclosure
- Food
- Hay
- Hide
- Plenty of toys
- Chews
- Treats
- Vitamin C supplements
- Grooming supplies
- Bedding
- Litter tray
- Ceramic or stainless-steel bowls (remember guinea pigs chew)
- Water bottle (bowls can be very messy when guinea pig plays)
- Litter tray



## Food and Water

- Small animals do not retain water as well as humans do. It is important to always provide fresh water..
- Daily diet should consist of:
  - 70-75% dried hay
  - 10-20% dried pellet specifically for guinea pigs
  - 5-10% fresh veggies and fruits high in Vitamin C (kale, carrots, turnip, greens, collard greens, blueberries, oranges, grapes)
- Guinea pigs have a higher Vitamin C requirement than other small animals. Guinea pigs do not manufacture their own Vitamin C so you must feed them a vitamin C enriched food like bell peppers, romaine lettuce, snap peas, cilantro, and parsley. Vitamin C drops and supplements will support the need, however make sure to change water bottles daily as the drops degrade after 24 hours.
- Avoid these foods:
  - Chocolate & other candy
  - Onions
  - Iceberg lettuce
- Treats may consist of:
  - Treat sticks
  - Prepackaged chew sticks



## Caging & Environment

- Guinea pigs should be housed alone, unless spayed or neutered.
- Caging should include a hide area, food bowl, water bottle, salt lick, and hay manger.
- A hide area is extremely important to guinea pigs — they love to play hide and seek!
- Bedding should be about 1” deep.
- The cage should have a solid bottom (the same goes for exercise wheels).
- The larger the cage, the better! Go for a cage that has a lot of surface area, rather than multiple levels.



## Behavior/Handling

- Guinea pigs teeth grow continuously throughout their life. Chewing wears down teeth to an appropriate level.
- Essential to dental health, it is important to provide different types of chews to assist with trimming, chewing, and flossing their ever-growing teeth.
- Guinea pigs rarely bite but can nip if they feel threatened. Try hand-feeding treats as a start.
- Always pick up a guinea pig by supporting its entire body. Squirring is normal at first, but make sure the entire body is supported — dropping a guinea pig can cause severe injury.
- Guinea pigs are super vocal! They will grunt, squeal, and whistle to show excitement.
- Guinea pigs can be litter trained. They will often choose a corner of the cage to eliminate in. Once you see this behavior, place a corner litter box in that spot and put some of the soiled bedding in the litter box. The guinea pig will continue to use that corner and clean up becomes a breeze!



## Signs of Illness

- If your guinea pig is not eating or pooping, take to a veterinarian immediately. Even smaller than normal amounts require attention.
- Sneezing, discharge from the eyes, nose, or ears are also problems that need veterinary attention.



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