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# Chinchilla Care Sheet

Care sheets provide basic information only. We recommend purchasing a book about your new pet, and seeing a local veterinarian for a wellness exam after adoption.

## Basic Information

- Average adult size: 12 inches long
- Average life span: 10+ years with proper care
- Chinchillas can be kept in same sex pairs/groups or individually. If unaltered males and females are kept together, breeding or fighting may occur.
- Chinchillas are nocturnal; they are active at night and sleep during the day.
- Always wash your hands after handling your pet, or cleaning its dishes, cage, toys, etc.

## Diet & Feeding

- Fresh food and water should always be available. Most chinchillas are accustomed to drinking from a water bottle.
- Timothy hay should make up the majority of their diet, along with specialized chinchilla pellets and a small amount of leafy green vegetables daily. Fruits may also be given once a week as a treat.
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within a few hours should be discarded.
- Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water, changed daily.
- Do **not** feed chocolate, caffeine, or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar and high fat treats.

## Housing

- Chinchillas acclimate well to average household temperatures, not above 80°F. Avoid extreme temperature changes. The habitat should be placed in an area that is away from drafts and direct sunlight.
  - The habitat should be large with multiple levels to allow jumping and a solid floor. The space between the bars of the cage should not exceed 1". It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
  - 1-2" of paper bedding, such as Carefresh, is recommended. Cedar shavings should not be used as bedding.
  - Clean and disinfect the habitat and non-porous toys regularly; remove wet spots daily. Bedding should be changed at least once a week or more often if necessary.
  - Provide a variety of chewable toys to promote proper teeth wear as their teeth grow continuously throughout their life. Chinchillas should also be given a place to hide.

## Health & Grooming

- Chinchillas require a dust bath twice a week. The dust bath should be removed from the habitat after 15-30 minutes.
- Do not get your chinchilla wet as their coat absorbs water which can lead to bacterial growth, chills, and illness.

A healthy chinchilla should be active, alert, and sociable, eating and drinking often, with healthy fur and clear eyes. A chinchilla that is inactive, losing weight, has diarrhea, hair loss, or distressed breathing may be sick. If you notice these signs, discharge from the eyes or nose, or other problems, please see your veterinarian right away.