



A Private Charity Since 1881

Gerbil 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: 4-5 inches long
- Average life span: up to 5 years with proper care
- Gerbils may be kept in same sex pairs if raised together or individually. If males and females are kept together, breeding or fighting may occur.
- 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 gerbils are accustomed to drinking from a water bottle.
- Species specific pellets or lab blocks should make up 90% of their diet, along with small amounts of fresh vegetables and fruits. Many gerbils are used to a seed-heavy diet. They should be transitioned gradually onto a pellet food.
- 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

- Gerbils acclimate well to average household temperatures, not above 80°F. Avoid extreme temperature changes. The habitat should be placed off the floor in an area that is away from drafts and direct sunlight.
 - A habitat should be plastic, metal, or glass with an escape proof solid bottom. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
 - 1-2" of paper bedding, such as Carefresh, is recommended. Cedar shavings should never be used as bedding.
 - Clean and disinfect the habitat and non-porous toys regularly; remove wet spots daily and change bedding at least once a week or more often if necessary.
 - Provide a variety of chewable toys to promote proper teeth wear as rodent's teeth grow continuously throughout their life. Gerbils should also be given a place to hide.

Health & Grooming

- Gerbils require a weekly dust bath. The dust bath should be removed from the habitat after 15-30 minutes. Gerbils can be brushed with a soft brush.

A healthy gerbil should be active, alert, and sociable, eating and drinking often, with healthy fur and clear eyes. A gerbil 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.