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# Guinea Pig 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: 8-11 inches long
- Average life span: up to 8 years with proper care
- Guinea Pigs should be kept in same sex pairs if raised together or individually. If unaltered males and females are kept together, breeding or fighting may occur.
- Guinea Pigs are social creatures that communicate through sounds and enjoy daily handling.
- 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 guinea pigs are accustomed to drinking from a water bottle.
- Timothy hay should make up the majority of their diet, along with specialized guinea pig pellets and a small amount of leafy green vegetables daily. Guinea Pigs are unable to produce their own vitamin C. A guinea pig should never be fed rabbit pellets.
- 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

- Guinea Pigs 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 minimum habitat size for one guinea pig should be at least 36"L x 30"W x 18"H with a solid bottom. It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
  - 1-2" of paper bedding, such as Carefresh, is recommended. Wood 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. Guinea Pigs should also be given a place to hide.

## Health & Grooming

- Guinea Pigs should be brushed to remove shedding hair and prevent matting in long haired breeds.
- Guinea Pigs also need regular nail trims to prevent overgrowth and curling.

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