



Care of your pet chinchilla

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Chinchillas are Rodents that were originally found in the Andes mountains of South America. While their wild ancestors are endangered, pet chinchillas are hugely popular all over the. With proper care they can live up to 10-15 years of age, which is amazing for a small rodent.

Diet

In the wild, chinchillas are adapted to thrive in a poor and high fiber plant diet. While pets they should have the following food items:

- Unlimited quantities of good quality hay (not alfalfa hay) and dry grasses (e.g. Readigrass®);
- Small amount (1 tablespoons/day) of chinchilla pellets;
- Dark leafy greens (2 tablespoons/day): as varied as possible: kale, spinach, cabbage, collared, spring and turnip greens, coriander, parsley, basil, etc.;
- Treats (maximum ½ tablespoon/day) – dried fruits

Some foods are not suitable for chinchillas because they are too sugary/starchy. Things like fruit, muesli-like mixes and seeds shouldn't be offered.

Fresh water should be available in bottles and/or bowls and changed daily

Housing

Chinchillas are social animals and should be kept in same sex pairs. To prevent fighting or unwanted pregnancies (if keeping a couple), males should be castrated when young.

A large and tall cage can house a pair of chinchillas. Ideally, the cage should have several platforms' hammocks and/or other climbing opportunities because chinchillas like to jump and climb. The floor should be covered with wood chips or other plant-based substrate. Multiple hiding places, like nest boxes or large PVC plumbing tubes, should always be available. Wire cage floors should be avoided as they can hurt chinchillas feet.

Chinchillas don't tolerate very well hot weather and should be kept below 25 °C.

To keep their hair coat healthy, chinchillas require dust baths. A shallow container with suitable dust should be provided daily for 10-15 minutes.

Veterinary care

We advise that all chinchillas should have the following **medical care**:

- Yearly health checks;
- Neutering surgery (castration) sometimes is advised for males;

Chinchillas are usually very hardy animals and hide they are unwell. There **are common signs of illness**. If your pet shows any of these, don't hesitate to contact us:

- Gut stasis (loss of appetite and not passing droppings) – can potentially be an emergency!
- Hair loss and itchiness, also any lumps on body;
- Weight loss and losing body condition;
- Teeth problems – refusing to eat, excessive drooling