

# Caring for your Guinea Pig

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## Their Home

Choose a good quality, well-constructed hutch of at least 3ft in length for one guinea pig, or 4ft. for two. Ensure that the hutch is weatherproofed and positioned in a damp-free and draught-free area of the garden. It is vitally important that the hutch is kept securely fastened. An outside run is welcomed by guinea pigs as this allows them to exercise and the harder concrete surfaces can be useful in helping to keep their nails shorter. Teeth and nails should be checked regularly for overgrowth.

**IMPORTANT:** Never leave guinea pigs unattended in the run. Guinea pigs are now being readily accommodated indoors and special guinea pig cages are available.

## Their Bedding

Lay about an inch of wood shavings ( not sawdust ) on the floor of the cage. Ensure that an ample supply of good quality dust-free hay is provided daily. During colder weather, extra hay should be provided. Clean out any soiled shavings and stale food on a daily basis.

Using a suitable pet safe disinfectant, the cage should be cleaned out thoroughly at least once per week, and the old bedding replaced with new.

## Their Daily Diet

Guinea pigs need vitamin C in their daily diet. It is essential that this is provided in the form of a good quality ‘ Guinea Pig Food’ with added vitamin C , together with a plentiful supply of fresh vegetables **EVERY DAY.**

The following are their favourites:

- Spring cabbage
- Carrot
- Celery
- Cucumber
- Kale
- tomatoes
- Lettuce ( in moderation )
- Chopped up apple

### NEVER FEED RHUBARB OR SPINACH.

**Do not feed ACS rabbit pellets: these are very harmful to guinea pigs.**

**Hay is an important part of their daily diet and they enjoy ‘Redigrass’ as a treat.**

**Fresh drinking water should be provided in a bottle at all times. The bottle should be cleaned regularly with a bottle brush.**

## Their special requirements

Guinea pigs are prone to skin mites and you should check for this problem regularly. Symptoms of skin mites are scabs, excessive scratching, dry, flaky skin and loss of fur. In the early stages, a small animal mite spray can help eliminate the problem, but more advanced cases require veterinary treatment. Left untreated, this condition can prove fatal. Avoid using poor quality, dusty hay.

<i>SHOPPING LIST</i>
<i>Hutch or cage</i>
<i>Shavings</i>
<i>Food dish</i>
<i>Water bottle</i>
<i>Food</i>
<i>Hay</i>
<i>Disinfectant</i>
<i>Vitamin drops</i>
<i>Mineral stone</i>
<i>Book</i>
<i>Brush or comb</i>