



# Caring for you new DWARF HAMSTER

Hamsters make good family pets. They are nocturnal so they are more active during the evening hours of the day. This would give you more time to enjoy them if you went to school or work during their sleeping time. They are small mammals that are ideal for families with limited space. Hamsters make a great pet for children providing they are taught the responsibilities of their pet's routine cleaning, feeding and care.

The Dwarf hamster originates from Russia, Siberia and China. In the wild they live in burrows in the day to keep cool (much like the Ovo Cages). They are active animals and travel great distances at night. They carry food in pouches and hoard it.

The varieties available are Russian (commonly known as Winter White; then classified further by their coat colours), Chinese and Roborovski.

Dwarf hamsters have been known to rarely get along with small single sex groups or pairs, though in most cases this is not likely. They can get quite territorial and fight if kept together for too long.

The average life of a dwarf hamster is one and a half to two years.

## Choosing and buying your hamster

A healthy hamster should be:

- Bright and alert
- Have no sign of discharge from eye, ears, mouth and nose
- Have a clean anal area
- Should have no signs of breathing problems
- Should move around the cage easily with no stiffness or staggering
- Should feel well covered and not bony

## Housing

There are many different cages to choose from for your new pet. You will need to make sure there is enough room for the food bowl, water bottle, bed area, exercise area (wheel and toys). If you need help, just ask!

The cage will need to be escape proof kept in an even temperature, ideally between 17°C and 23°C. A sudden drop in temperature may put your hamster into hibernation.

Sawdust or dust free substrate will make a great floor covering for your cage. Soft shredded paper (not newspaper) can be used as bedding and nesting material. Your hamster's cage should be emptied and cleaned with a pet safe disinfectant at least once a week, if not more often.

## Feeding and Water

Hamsters are omnivores and so will enjoy a varied diet. A good complete mix or pellet will provide the balanced diet that they require. Certain mixes are complete or need to be supplemented with extra vitamins. Mineral blocks, vitamin supplements and fresh fruits or vegetables but remember hamsters hoard their food and this can rot. Soft fruit such as bananas should not be given to hamsters because it can stick in their pouches.

Fresh clean water must be available at all times and is best provided by a gravity-fed bottle.

You can give your pet the occasional treat. If you are unsure on what you can give, please ask.

## Handling

It is important to handle your hamster regularly to help you build up a relationship with him/her. The more you handle him/her the tamer he/she will become in a shorter period of time.

When you first get your hamster home make sure you let him/her settle in for the first night to get used to their new surroundings. Slowly introduce yourself by letting them get used to your scent. Gently cup underneath him/her, not to startle them with any sudden movements, as they can be very quick and slip out of your hands.

Do not try to handle your hamster if he/she has just woken up as they feel vulnerable at this time and may bite.

## General Care

Hamsters normally stay healthy throughout their lives. They can suffer from the occasional cough or sneezes and their nose and eyes may run, so keep them warm and away from any drafts. Hamsters can suffer acute diarrhea known as "wet tail". If this occurs take your pet to the vets immediately.

Hamsters will need to keep their teeth nice and trim so that they don't grow too long. Giving them gnaw blocks will help keep them nice and trim.

If your hamster escapes from their cage try putting a box or bowl in the room corner with some food to bait them. He/she may well be in there the next morning.

## Shopping List

- Food (Beaphar/Harry Hamster)
- Water bottle/Food Bowls
- Cage
- Transportation Carrier
- Brush/Comb
- Treats
- Bedding
- Straw/Hay
- Insecticidal sprays
- Gnaw blocks
- Salt Lick
- Shampoo
- Minerals/vitamins (Vionate)
- Litter
- Corner Litter Tray
- Litter scoop
- Pet Safe disinfectant
- Book on care specific to your hamster

**For more information feel free to talk to any of the Jumanji Pets employees, we are here to help!**

0207 372 5693