



Caring for you new GUINEA PIG

Guinea pigs (Cavies) originate from Peru where they roam about the countryside in family groups usually comprised of one male and a group of females and their young. It is advisable to keep guinea pigs in pairs or small groups of the same sex.

They can be kept indoors or in an outdoor hutch. Although naturally nervous they soon become used to gentle handling and rarely bite.

The average life of a guinea pig is 4-8 years.

Choosing and buying your guinea pig

When choosing a guinea pig you must consider exercise and grooming requirements. You also need to consider the cost of feeding, health care, holiday care and day care for while you are working.

Your new guinea pig should be at least 4-5 weeks old when you buy it.

A healthy guinea should be:

- Bright and alert
- Have no signs of discharge from eyes, ears, mouth and nose
- Have a clean anal area
- Have a glossy coat
- Be able to move about easily with no signs or lameness

Housing

Guinea pigs should be provided with as large a cage as possible. A hutch for outdoors should be sturdy and waterproof. It should be raised off the floor by about 25cm and placed in a sheltered position or inside a shed. Guinea pigs must be protected from inclement weather as well as strong sunlight as well as being protected from any insect infestations like fly strike.

If you decide to keep your guinea pigs indoors then a cage similar but much larger than those used for hamsters would be suitable. These should be placed in a cool room out of direct sunlight and drafts.

Avoid using pesticides in or near the hutch. A hutch or cage should have a layer of shavings on the floor with straw for bedding and hay or hay cookies for eating.

Hygiene is extremely important especially in the summer. If not kept clean the hutch or cage will attract flies. Cages should be cleaned regularly, at least once a week, if not more often with a suitable pet-safe disinfectant; bedding and shavings to be replaced with a fresh supply. Guinea pigs often use often use the same area as their toilet every day. You can help train them to use a specific corner if you leave one corner empty of food, water and sleeping area.

- Toys should be provided to break boredom. Try to buy a selection of toys and rotate them to avoid boredom
- Gnaw blocks should be provided to help wear down teeth from growing too long

Feeding and Water

Guinea pigs are herbivores. A range of specially prepared diets are available from your pet shop. Fresh foods can be given in small quantities. Cabbage, sprouts, carrots, apple, dandelions..etc (ask if you are unsure).

A supply of good quality hay is essential for the health of your guinea's digestive system. They require vitamin C daily. This can be provided in a liquid form or in part of a well balanced food. Fresh water should be available at all times.

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

Tummy Care is an excellent complementary feed for pet guinea pigs. It helps the digestive system in settling in animals into new environments as well as giving them the nutrients they need in a healthy diet.

Handling

Settling in:

It is advisable to let your new pet settle in for a few days before you start handling.

Try to use gentle movements, gripping firmly but not tightly, and supporting the hind legs so he/she will feel secure. That will help prevent injury to the back from kicking.

It is important to remember that your new guinea will be a bit shy in his/her new environment, but it's up to you to make sure he/she will feel comfortable and safe.

General Care

You should check regularly if your hay or straw goes mouldy, as it can cause respiratory problems. You could even consider dust-free options instead of using woodshavings as a substrate. You should check the teeth and nails regularly so they aren't over grown.

If your guinea shows signs of ill health contact your vet as soon as possible. If you don't have a vet, we can advise you of one.

Grooming not only will help to keep your guinea pig healthy, but helps you bond with your pet. Long haired or short hair, your guinea will still need grooming attention. If you are unsure about the suitable ways to groom your guinea, we can help you out.

Shopping List

- Food (Beaphar/Gerty Guinea)
- Water bottle/Food Bowls
- Cage/Hutch
- Transportation Carrier
- Brush/Comb
- Treats
- Straw/Hay
- Fly strike/insecticidal sprays
- Gnaw blocks
- Salt Lick
- Shampoo
- Minerals/vitamins (Vionate)
- Litter
- Corner Litter Tray
- Litter scoop
- Pet Safe disinfectant
- Book on care specific to guinea pigs

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

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