

HAMSTER ADOPTION GUIDE

NEW HAMSTER SHOPPING LIST

Congratulations on adopting a hamster from Pasadena Humane. Here is a basic care guide to help you give your new pet the best life in your home.

Hamster Basics

- Hamsters, on average, live 2-3 years. This varies depending on health and proper care.
- Hamsters are burrowing animals and need at least 6 inches of bedding.
- Hamsters eat a mixture of seed and pellet food.
- Some hamsters can be housed together; however, for safety purposes, it is recommended that they live by themselves to minimize the risk of fighting and stress.

- Hamster enclosure, aquarium or DIY bin enclosure.
- Paper-based bedding, enough for 6 in. or more of bedding in their enclosure.
- Solid-plastic hamster wheel.
- Food and water bowls/water bottle.
- Hamster food.
- Bowl for sand bath and appropriate sand (i.e. reptile sand).
- Furniture for their enclosure.

Housing

- Wire cages from pet stores should not be used. They are dangerous because hamsters can get stuck between the wires and are toxic if chewed on. Fish tanks are a safer option and provide more space for ample bedding.
- A cost-effective enclosure is a 40-75 gallon plastic storage bin.
- Paper-based bedding products are the safest for hamsters.
- Avoid wood-based bedding, as the oils in the wood can cause respiratory issues.
- At least six inches of bedding is required; more is always better.
- Wooden platforms should be placed throughout the cage for heavier objects such as water bottles, food bowls, dust baths, and wheels.
- Wheels should be solid plastic and should not have any holes or bars for safety, as hamsters can catch their feet and get hurt. It is important to provide the right size wheel to avoid injury to the spine. Bigger is always better!
- Spot clean daily or every other day. Avoid completely removing the bedding as hamsters like their scent and can become stressed when their home smells different.
- Sand baths should be available in enclosures for hamsters to use. Sand baths are beneficial to the skin and coat of the hamster, as well as great enrichment. Avoid chinchilla dust, as the fine powder can damage a hamster's lungs. Instead, reptile sand is the easiest and most readily available safe sand bath option.



PASADENA HUMANE

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Diet

- Hamsters should have a base diet of a nutritionally complete pellet.
- It is important that the hamster diet being used has approximately 17-25% crude protein, 35-40% carbohydrates, 4-5% crude fat, and 6-8% crude fiber.
- Treats should not make up more than 10% of a hamster's diet.
- Seed treats such as pumpkin, flax, or sunflower seeds are great treats for hamsters.
- Avoid high-sugar treats such as yogurt drops. Fresh vegetables are okay when offered sparingly in moderation.

Enrichment

- Hamster teeth grow continuously, so they need hard, non-toxic, chewable surfaces to grind their teeth and keep them at a healthy length.
- Safe wood, such as willow balls and rings, as well as bamboo sticks, are great toys and great for their dental health.
- Toys and enrichment that can be offered for hamsters are properly-sized tubes in their bedding, cardboard tubes with treats, and foraging toys.

