

GUINEA PIG ADOPTION GUIDE

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

Guinea Pig Basics

- The average lifespan for guinea pigs is 6-8 years, but this varies depending on health and proper care.
- Guinea pigs need a lot of space to exercise and explore to provide enrichment in their lives.
- Guinea pigs eat a mixture of hay, vegetables, and pellets.
- Guinea pigs are herd animals and thrive with companionship; they need at least one housemate. It is detrimental to a guinea pig's health to be kept alone.

Housing

- Cages should be a minimum of 7.5 sq ft.
- Each additional guinea pig requires an additional space of at least 3 sq ft.
- Cages should not have wire bottoms to avoid injury to feet.
- X-pens or puppy pens are great options to give your guinea pig a safe, extended space.
- Provide at least one hide per guinea pig; they are prey animals and feel more comfortable when they have places to hide and sleep.
- Cages can be lined with shredded newspaper or paper-based bedding products.
- Avoid wood-based bedding products because the oils in the wood can cause respiratory issues.
- Temperature should range from 65-75°F. Giving your guinea pig a frozen water bottle is a safe and easy way to cool them down when it's hot.

Diet

- Diet for a guinea pig consists of roughly 80% hay (timothy or orchard hay), 10% pellets and 10% veggies.
- Guinea pigs should be offered unlimited access to hay.
- Pellets should be high-quality and fortified in vitamin C. Guinea pigs cannot produce vitamin C, so it is very important to ensure that their diet consists of vitamin C rich foods.
- Romaine lettuce, red and green leaf lettuces, mustard or turnip greens, cabbage, kale, cilantro and parsley should comprise the bulk of your guinea pig's fresh produce.
- Fruit should be offered sparingly due to high levels of sugar.

Enrichment

- Guinea pig teeth grow continuously, so it is important to provide regular hay and hard, non-toxic, chewable surfaces to wear down their teeth and keep them healthy.
- Safe wood, such as willow balls, rings, and bamboo sticks, are great toys for playing and chewing.
- Toys and enrichment that can be offered for guinea pigs are chewable toys, tunnels, hiding huts, and "obstacle courses" to keep your guinea pig active and mentally stimulated.

Health

- Online resources such as aemv.org (Association of Exotic Mammal Veterinarian) are available to help find an exotic veterinarian.
- Taking your guinea pig to the vet annually for an exam is important for their long-term health and well-being.

New Guinea Pig Shopping List

- Guinea pig cage 4'x3' minimum
- X-Pen or puppy pen
- Food & water bowls
- At least 2 hides
- Timothy and/or orchard hay
- Guinea pig pellets
- Greens and veggies
- Non-toxic chewable toys (willow balls, bamboo sticks)
- Enrichment toys (tubes, platforms, balls etc.)
- Paper-based bedding



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