

CARING FOR YOUR

CHINCHILLA

PET CARE
TRUST



We care about pet care

These medium-sized 'furry' animals make ideal pets. Chinchillas are rodents, native to the Andean mountain area of South America. Chinchillas are a protected species in the wild. The ones offered for sale have been bred in this country. They are active in the evening but are not purely a nocturnal animal.

Chinchillas are available in a variety of colours:- light/medium grey, beige, black velvet, mosaic, silver and white being the most popular. Their lifespan is 15-20 years.

HOUSING

Chinchillas of either sex may be kept singly but if you wish to keep a pair they must be of a single sex and must both be purchased as babies and at the same time: A breeding pair should be at least seven months old before the female is introduced to the male. Chinchillas do not like damp or draughty conditions. The cage should be of wire-mesh construction with a raised wire-mesh floor to prevent the coat becoming soiled. A removable tray placed under the floor will make it easier to keep the cage clean. For a single chinchilla the cage should measure 45cm x 45cm x 45cm. For a non breeding pair the size should be 60cm x 45cm x 45cm and for a breeding pair 90cm x 45cm x 45cm. Larger cages can be provided when space permits. A nest box or shelf should be provided.

The cage should be placed in a dry area, away from draughts and excessive heat. Great care should be taken not to let your chinchilla escape. Essential cage accessories include a food container, water bottle, hay rack and dust bath.

FEEDING

Your chinchilla should be fed on a diet of specially prepared Chinchilla pellets. It is important to give quality hay to provide essential roughage. Rabbit pellets and rodent/hamster mixes are not suitable. The use of wrong foods will reduce the life span and breeding capability. Any changes in diet must

be introduced gradually. You should mix the two foods together and gradually increase the volume of the new food and reduce the volume of the old one until a total change is achieved. A piece of cuttlefish bone is a good form of calcium supplement. As a treat one raisin or sunflower seed may be given daily.

WATER

It is essential for your chinchilla to have a ready supply of fresh drinking water, which should be given in a chew-proof gravity feed bottle.

GENERAL CARE

Chinchillas have the densest coat of any land mammal (60 separate hairs from a single root). To keep the coat in peak condition they are given a dustbath. The dustbath consists of a metal container which is filled to a 5cm depth with Chinchilla sand (a mined volcanic dust). The bath is placed inside the cage each day. Your chinchilla will then 'roll' in the dust to clean his coat. The bath should be removed after ten minutes. Fullers Earth and silver sand are not suitable for this purpose. Your chinchilla should be groomed at least once a week. Your pet shop will have a range of suitable grooming combs and brushes. As a general rule chinchillas are hardy animals and rarely become ill. Should you become concerned about your chinchilla's health you should consult your veterinary surgeon.

SHOPPING LIST

Cage, Tray, Food, Litter, Hay, Hay Rack, Brush, Comb, Nest Box, Dust Bath, Chinchilla Sand, Shelf, Food Dish, Water Bottle and Cuttlefish.

This leaflet gives basic guidelines only. It is not intended to be a substitute for a good book on Chinchillas. Your pet shop will be pleased to show you their range.

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