

CARING FOR YOUR

GUINEA PIG



We care about pet care

Guinea Pigs (Cavies) make very popular pets. They are naturally clean and fairly hardy. They can be kept indoors or in outside accommodation. Although naturally nervous they soon become used to gentle handling.

Guinea pig varieties are distinguished by the texture, length and colour of their hair and by coat patterns. They can broadly be classified as Smooth Coat, Abyssinian and Peruvian.

HOUSING

Choose a well-constructed branded hutch. The hutch must be weatherproof with an overhanging roof. Wooden floors should be treated with a suitable protective sealant. Doors must be kept securely fastened. An outside run with a wire top can be provided for secure free exercise. Do not allow him to run about freely indoors as he may cause damage. If you plan to keep your guinea pig indoors a range of suitable cages are available. Your pet shop will show you their range. Always keep your guinea pig away from draughts and damp.

BEDDING

This should consist of peat, whitewood sawdust or woodshavings. You should also provide good quality hay. Some of this will also be used for bedding. Remove any wet bedding, stale food and droppings daily. Wipe any damp patches with a suitable disinfectant. Once a week you should empty the hutch or cage and clean it thoroughly, washing with a suitable disinfectant. Rinse and dry thoroughly. Renew the bedding material. Clean and move the outside pen regularly.

FEEDING

Guinea pigs are vegetarian. A range of suitable specially prepared diets are available from your pet shop. In addition, cabbage, sprouts, dandelions, chicory and lettuce can be given in small amounts. Carrot, apple and some soft fruits are also suitable. An occasional locust bean is also appreciated. Mineral licks and

vitamin drops should be given. Do not over-feed. Wash feeding containers daily.

WATER

Fresh drinking water must always be available. The best way of providing this is through a bottle securely fastened to the wire of the cage. The bottle should be emptied, rinsed out and refilled daily.

HANDLING

Using smooth and gentle movements and gripping firmly but not tightly place one hand across shoulders with the thumb over and around the neck. With the other hand support the rump. This prevents injury to the back by kicking.

GENERAL CARE

Given a good routine your guinea pig should keep healthy. Check regularly that the hay does not go mouldy, as this can cause respiratory problems. Long-haired guinea pigs will need some grooming with suitable coat-care equipment. Your pet shop will give you advice. Occasionally a guinea pig's teeth will over grow and will need trimming. Seek advice from your pet shop or vet.

SHOPPING LIST

Hutch/cage, Run, Hay, Food, Woodshavings, Peat, Food bowl, Water bowl, Vitamin C, Treats, Salt Lick, Brush and Comb.

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

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Registered Charity No:1052488