

CARING FOR YOUR

HAMSTER



We care about pet care

Hamsters are one of the most popular of the small pet mammals. It takes up little space, and requires very little daily attention. As it is mainly a nocturnal animal it is ideal if you cannot be at home for most of the day.

More than twenty varieties have been bred from the original 'golden' hamster. Along with the original smooth coat there are now satin and long-haired varieties. Colours include cream, white, blue, black, tortoiseshell, sable, grey, cinammon, together with banded and tricoloured coat patterns. Hamsters are suitable for children, but parents must remember that if the child is very young they must be responsible for supervising their daily care and handling. Their life span is 3-5 years.

HOUSING

A metal or strong plastic cage is best. Your pet shop will be pleased to assist you with your choice. The cage must be sited in a safe place, away from draughts and out of the reach of other pets. Your hamster will require sawdust or fine wood shavings on the floor of the cage and a very soft proprietary bedding material made from natural fibre. Material containing man-made fibre must not be used. Hay or straw should not be used, as this is too harsh. Change any soiled bedding daily. Your hamster should be kept at normal room temperature. Avoid sudden changes in temperature. If the temperature is too low he could become dormant or even die. Hamsters tend to be rather anti-social with one another. The golden rule is 'one to a cage'. Never mix them with other rodents.

HANDLING

All handling must be done gently. It is best to scoop up the hamster with both hands from underneath, but if using one hand this should be placed firmly across his back with the head facing your wrist. Hamsters have a very loose skin and can easily slip out of your hands.

FEEDING

The hamster's basic diet is a prepared balanced mixture of grain, seeds and nuts. This can be fed in a pelleted form. In addition a small amount of fresh green stuff and carrot may be fed. Vitamin drops added to the water are beneficial, as are hamster treats, nibbles and hide chews. You may provide a mineral block. A mature hamster will consume a tablespoonful of food each day, but will carry more than this to his 'larder'.

WATER

Fresh clean drinking water must always be available, kept in a special feeding bottle.

GENERAL CARE

Your hamster will groom himself with his front paws. The dark spots on his sides are in fact oil glands which keep the coat sleek and shiny. Overgrown teeth can be prevented by providing hard chewing material. If they do occur they can be clipped by a skilled operator or your veterinary surgeon. Hamsters are generally very hardy, but if yours does become unwell you should seek veterinary advice.

SHOPPING LIST

Cage, Bedding, Litter, Food, Water Bottle, Bottle Brush, Food Dish, Vitamins, Toys, Mineral Block, Treats and Chews.

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

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