



CAGES - The more space a guinea pig has the happier they will be. Most cages marketed for guinea pigs are traditionally too small once you get their goodies (hidey house, food dish, etc.) inside. With a large cage you also won't have to change the bedding as often. A great option is a Cubes & Coroplast cage, which can be bought or made at home (very cost effective). They can be customized for your space, and aren't too difficult to create or clean. Google "Cubes and Coroplast cage" to see examples, or visit www.guineapigcages.com. A Midwest Guinea Pig Cage is another good option that can be found on Amazon. If you can't have a large cage, providing daily "floor time" is a great alternative. Always supervise floor time (especially in the presence of young children and/or other pets).

BEDDING - Recycled paper bedding (Carefresh, Kaytee, etc.) is a great option, because it has less dust than wood-shavings. A layer of newspaper underneath the bedding allows for easier cleanup, and will avoid urine buildup. As an alternative to traditional bedding, fleece is often used because it can be washed and reused. There are many resources that give tips for using fleece online. Be sure to only use *non-scented, dye-free* laundry detergent.

FOOD - Adult Guinea Pigs (6 months +) need raw Timothy Hay and pellets made from Timothy Hay, both of which can be purchased in most pet supply stores (Petco and PetSmart). Look for pellets with no added color or dried fruit, nuts or seeds (high in sugar and fat content). Hay keeps their teeth from overgrowing, and loose hay (not cubes) should be used. Young Guinea Pigs (birth-6 months) need Alfalfa-based pellets and hay, because it has calcium that is good for growing piggies (but it's too much for adults). We recommend Kaytee, KMS Hayloft, Mazuri, Oxbow, Sherwood Pet Health and Small Pet Select.

In addition to hay and pellets, guinea pigs can have many different kinds of veggies and fruits for snacks, including apples, carrots, leaf lettuce, cucumbers, bell peppers, oranges, strawberry tops, tomatoes and much more. Celery, broccoli, cauliflower, potatoes and a few other things should be avoided. The website, <http://www.guinealynx.info/>, has a great overview of acceptable fruits and veggies (in addition to other health and care advice for piggy parents).

VITAMIN C - Guinea pigs need Vitamin C to maintain their health. They should have between 10 - 30 mg per day. Sherwood Pet Health and Oxbow make a guinea pig supplement, or you can buy adult (not children's), chewable tablets (the less sugar the better) and break them down into smaller portions (size depends on overall mg of the tablet) to give the approximate dosage they need. Avoid Vitamin C drops added to water (there is no way to ensure they get an adequate amount and it changes the flavor of the water often causing them to drink less). The drops also cause a slimy buildup in their water bottle.

GENERAL CARE - With proper diet and cage cleaning, the likelihood of illness is decreased. About once a month you'll want to trim their nails. At our Small Critter Events we offer nail trims for a \$5 donation. There are many resources online for tips! You can use human nail clippers, or the clippers designed for cats or small animals. Cornstarch can be used to stop the bleeding if you get too close. Male guinea pigs *may* require some routine cleaning of their genital area as they age. There are resources online to guide you. If you're ever concerned about the health of your pet, visit <http://www.guinealynx.info/> and plan to visit your vet!

OUTSIDE TIME - When it's nice out, guinea pigs can go outside for short periods of time BUT should not be left unsupervised! Ensure your grass **IS NOT** treated with pesticides because they WILL eat it. Consider a covered play area (perhaps the top of your cage) so predators from the sky don't make them a snack.

INTRODUCTIONS - Guinea pigs thrive socially and most like a companion. If you plan to add another pig to the mix, please remember All Paws guinea pigs (and most others) are NOT fixed and are capable of reproducing. **The contract you sign states you will not place opposite sex guinea pigs together,** but feel free to place females with other females and males with other males. Before introducing two guinea pigs it is wise to wait for a quarantine period (2 weeks) to ensure neither is sick. When you start introductions, begin with small, 15-20 minute sessions outside of a cage in a neutral space (perhaps on the floor or

GUINEA PIG CARE TIPS

outside). Gradually increase their time together until you are confident they'll get along and avoid leaving them alone until you're certain they're friendly to one another. For more tips on introductions, visit: <http://www.cavyspirit.com/sociallife.htm>.