



Home Care for Pet Chinchillas

Food and Water

- Timothy or orchard grass hay should be 80-90% of the diet and should always be available.
- Use plain, hay-based pellets, with no seeds, nuts, or dried fruit.
 - Most adult chinchillas should get 1-2 tablespoons per day.
- Small amounts of fresh produce can be given daily. Fruits are okay in small amounts.
- Avoid treats that are high in sugar (e.g. commercial treats, yogurt drops).
- Fresh water should always be available in a bottle and changed daily.

Caging and Bedding

- Cages should have a flat bottom (no wire) to prevent foot injuries. They do well in multi-level cages that allow room to jump and turn.
- A hide-box or igloo should be available
- Bedding should be unscented, dye-free paper bedding. Avoid terry cloth towels, carpet, or wood chips.

Enrichment

- Toy options: cardboard boxes, commercially available toys made from timothy hay, natural wood blocks (pesticide free) or branches to chew on.
- Exercise wheels with solid (not wire) floors that won't catch his/her toes.
- Time outside the cage should be supervised. Restrict access to electrical cords or other dangerous household items.
- Give access to a volcanic ash dust bath for 15-20 minutes once or twice a week. Over-use of the dust bath can lead to eye and upper respiratory problems.

Veterinary Care

- Chinchillas should have yearly veterinary exams to evaluate their overall health. Older chinchillas or chinchillas with known health problems need to be seen more frequently.
- Some chinchillas require regular dental care, as their teeth grow continuously throughout life.
- Signs that your chinchilla is sick include decreased appetite, decreased fecal output, small fecal balls, lethargy, sneezing or nasal discharge, excessive salivation, sores on the feet, or abnormal urination.
- Chinchillas are good at hiding signs of illness until they are very sick. Contact your veterinarian right away if you have any indication your chinchilla is not feeling well. Not eating for more than 12 hours is always an emergency.