

New Pet Shopping List

- Water bottle
- Food dish
- Hay holder
- Housing - Large cage
- Toys – Safe wood toys
- Safe litter – such as aspen shavings, CareFresh, Yesterday's News.
- Food – Fresh Hay, quality chinchilla pellets, fresh water.
- Veterinarian – It's important you have a vet that has experience with chinchillas. All animals can require vet care and having one in advance provides peace of mind.

Common Myths

MYTH: Chinchillas are comfortable at the same temperatures as humans.

FACT: Chinchillas originated in the Andes Mountains and prefer temperatures in the 60 – 70 degree range. Chinchillas overheat and can die at temperatures above 74 degrees F.

MYTH: Chinchillas are cuddly.

FACT: While they are the softest coated animal in the world, most chinchillas do not like to be held and cuddled. They prefer to run around in a room and check in with you and go off and play again.

Resources

Wee Companions
www.weecompanions.com

Chins and Hedgies.
www.chins-n-hedgies.com

CHINFormative
www.chinformative.com

Cages
www.martinscages.com
www.qualitycages.com
Ferret Nation and Critter Nation by Midwest Cages
www.bassequipment.com – custom pans for Ferret and Critter Nation cages

Chinchilla care guide



**Wee Companions
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The Perfect Chinchilla

Chinchillas can make wonderful pets, if you know what you are getting into. They are intelligent, friendly on their own terms, and playful animals.

The average lifespan of a chinchilla is 16 – 20 years and there are documented cases of chinchillas living to 25 years. This should be taken into consideration before you make the decision to bring a chin into your family.

Handling & Play

Most chinchillas enjoy out of cage time each day. This should be in a room that has been made safe by making sure that they cannot get to any wires and there is nothing that they will get into that could harm them. Chinchillas love to run and jump, so it is important that there are no items that can potentially fall and injure them.

When you pick up your chinchilla, care should be given not to squeeze the chest as chins have very tiny bones. When holding a chin, gently but firmly hold the base of their tail and support their bodies with a hand under their tummy. Do not grab a chinchilla by the middle or tip of their tail as you can cause irreparable damage.

Diet

Chinchillas have a delicate digestive system and should not be fed fresh vegetables or fruit of any kind; this includes dried fruit like raisins.

Diet should be kept very simple. A quality chinchilla pellet (i.e. Oxbow, APD, Mazuri, Purina Advanced Nutrition Rabbit Sho or Pro, Nutrena Naturewise 16%, Tradition.), grass type hay (Timothy, orchard) and fresh water should be available at all times. Treats should be limited to once or twice a week and can consist of

unsweetened bite sized shredded wheat, a few rolled oats, dried rosehips, dried hibiscus flowers, dried dandelion greens.

Housing

Chinchillas need lots of space to run around, and require a fairly large cage. A large wire cage modified with wooden ledges and shelves is good. Most chinchillas love to run on wheels. Wheels should be at least 15” in diameter and have a solid running surface.

Make sure the cage has good ventilation, a chinchilla’s cage needs to be cleaned at least weekly, and all the contents of the cage washed. Shredded aspen is good bedding, as are CareFresh, Cell-Sorb and Yesterday’s News. Polar fleece cage liners can also be used. Cedar beddings should not be used as they damage the respiratory tract, causing chronic respiratory disease, and asthma and liver problems. Several types of suitable bedding are available for purchase from Wee Companions.

Breeding

Wee Companions does not endorse the breeding of animals and any chinchillas adopted from us are not to be bred under any circumstances

Breeding any animal responsibly means making an effort to improve the species as a whole, and chinchillas are no exception. It’s important to know the genetic history of chinchillas that are bred so lines with possible health problems are not continued. Breeding chinchillas should not be taken lightly. Typical litter size is 1 – 3. One or two is the optimal litter size. With litters of 3 or more there is often fighting between the kits and intervention is often required for rotating and feeding kits.

Health Care

Like any animal, chinchillas can get sick. The most common ailments in chinchillas are heatstroke, broken limbs, bloat and malocclusion.

Heatstroke and most broken limbs are preventable by keeping chins in an air-conditioned environment and using a cage that has appropriate solid wooden ledges and shelves.

Bloat or stasis is a serious condition where the gut stops moving. If your chinchilla stops eating, has reduced poop production, in size or amount, get them to a vet immediately. Bloat and stasis are deadly if not treated promptly. .

The appropriate treatment for a broken limb is amputation. The bones of chinchillas are very delicate and do not knit together well. The kindest option is amputation. Chinchillas function quite well with only three limbs.

The two primary causes of malocclusion: are genetics and injury. If a chinchilla stops eating, is drooling and/or has a runny eye it is very often malocclusion and veterinary attention is needed immediately.

Although chinchillas are hardy little critters, they can fall ill and can do so quite quickly so any indication that your chinchilla could be ill should be taken very seriously. Chinchillas deserve as much care and responsibility as any other pet and that includes vet care.

Please establish a relationship with a chinchilla knowledgeable vet before a medical emergency arises.