

Chinchilla Care

General

Chinchillas make appealing pets for all ages. They sleep most of the day and become active in the evening. Chinchillas are natural acrobats and some find it hard to sit still, others love to be held and petted. It's best to keep two same-sex chinchillas as companions, as they are very social. With good care chinchillas can live over 10 years.

Avoid sudden movements and loud noises, so your chinchillas will trust you and let you handle them easily. They are naturally inquisitive and may sniff or gently nibble your fingers. Children should always be supervised when holding chinchillas, to prevent accidental falls and injuries. Daily exercise outside the cage, in a chinchilla-safe room, is vital to good health, and a daily bath in Chinchilla Dust is recommended.

Housing

Chinchillas need room to exercise, so choose the largest cage you can afford. Those with wire floors are easy to keep clean but you should cover at least half of the floor with a smooth surface to avoid serious injuries to the chinchillas' feet. Your chinchillas will enjoy multi-level cages, or shelves, as well as a hideaway house and a variety of safe wooden toys.

Diet

Healthy diet is based on specially formulated chinchilla pellets and good quality hay, available at all times. Adults may be offered one or two raisins occasionally as a treat and fresh water should always be available in a clean bottle. Cleaning

Clean soiled areas daily. Food dishes, water bottles and the cage bottom need washing weekly, preferably with an animal safe antiseptic. Always rinse and dry the cage well before putting your animal back.

Health

Male chinchillas become sexually mature at around four months of age. To avoid health risks and unwanted babies, it's important to accurately sex and separate chinchillas no later than four months old.

Be alert and consult a vet if you notice signs of illness or injury such as: lack of droppings or soft droppings; excessive drinking or urinating; dirty, wet or patchy fur; sneezing, wheezing or runny nose; limping, cuts or bumps, bleeding from any opening.

Warning

Open wire exercise wheels can cause serious injuries and should never be used for chinchillas. Solid galvanised wheels can be purchased from specialist suppliers. Check out the Chinchilla Care web link for more information.