

Degus Care

General

Degus are inquisitive and friendly, making them delightful companions. It's best to keep two or more same-sex degus together since they are very social and will not thrive alone. With good care, degus live an average of 6-8 years.

Avoid sudden movements and loud noises, so your degus will trust you and let you handle them easily. Degus are full of curiosity, and may sniff or gently nibble your fingers. Children should always be supervised when holding degus, to prevent accidental falls and injuries.

Regular exercise outside the cage, in a degu-safe room, is vital to good health, and a bath in Chinchilla dust 2-3 times a week will be greatly enjoyed.

Housing

Degus need room to exercise, so choose as large a cage as possible. Metal cages with solid multi level floors are best, as degus can chew through both wood and plastic. Degus love exercise wheels but chose one with solid sides, wire wheels are unsuitable as they can injure feet and tails. Cover the floor with safe bedding, and add shredded paper in a wood nesting house. Do not use pine or cedar shavings, as they contain harmful oils.

Diet

A healthy diet is based on specially formulated degu pellets or half chinchilla and half guinea pig pellets mixed, plus good-quality hay, available at all times. Supplement this with small amounts of fresh vegetables, especially leafy greens and carrots. Water should always be available in a clean bottle. Cleaning

Clean soiled areas daily and change the bedding weekly. Food dishes, water bottles and the cage bottom need washing weekly. Always rinse and dry the cage well before adding fresh bedding.

Health

Female degus can become sexually mature as early as 8 or 9 weeks old. To avoid health risks and unwanted babies it's important to accurately sex and separate degus no later than two months of age.

Degus are generally hardy animals, but if they are fed sugar they may suffer from diabetic-related illnesses, such as cataracts, weight-loss, kidney damage, blindness, and loss of circulation. Mouth problems include overgrown teeth and white teeth. Be alert and consult a vet if you notice signs of illness or injury.

Warning

NEVER give your degus any food containing sugar, or they will become ill. Also, remember not to hold them by the tail, as it will break off.