

Housing

Bigger is better! A larger cage requires less frequent cleaning and provides space for play, toys, and exercise. Spacious cages made of wire cubes and Coroplast sheets are superior to small manufactured cages. Wire bottoms, wire ramps, and shelves can seriously injure a guinea pig's feet and legs.

SIZE: Minimum 7 square feet for one cavy. Add at least 1 square foot per additional cavy.

BEDDING: Cover the cage floor with 2 inches of CareFRESH® or Yesterday's News® (paper products), aspen shavings, or kiln-dried pine shavings. Frequent changing (every 3 or 4 days or less) will prevent odors and help keep your cavy healthy.

NOT RECOMMENDED:

Cedar shavings contain aromatic oils (phenols) which can contribute to respiratory problems. Sawdust is too dusty. Corncob bedding often has molds. Cat litter is also a poor choice for bedding.

ACCESSORIES: Water bottle, heavy untipplable dish for pellets, a small covered box or Pigloo for sleeping, and a cat carrier for transport to the vet and for traveling.

Things To Watch For!

Despite their robust nature, Cavies in captivity depend on your commitment to care for their needs of food, water, medical care, and companionship. Stay observant! When a cavy is ill, it can go fast downhill. Any of the following signs need to be addressed by your Veterinarian immediately:
Refusal to eat or drink; lethargy; labored breathing; diarrhea; loss of balance; head tilt; blood in urine; crusty eyes; dull and/or receding eyes; wheezing; sneezing; excessive scratching; or hair loss; rough or puffed up coat; hunched posture; limping;

WARNING: Penicillin like Amoxicillin and other related drugs are deadly to cavies!!!

Further Questions?



5470 Doniphan Dr. Suite A2
El Paso, TX 79932
Phone: (915) 833-0645

Caring for Your Guinea Pig (Cavy)



Guinea Pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) belong to the rodent family. They can be found in grasslands, forest edges, swamps, and rocky areas throughout South America. Cavies make great family pets. They are non-aggressive and rarely scratch or bite.

Lifespan: 5-7 years

Adult Weight: Male: 900-1200g Female: 750-900g

Average Size: 8-11 inches long

Body Temperature: 101.5-103 F

Housing Temperature: 65-79 F Cavies tolerate cooler temperatures better than heat. Prone to heat strokes, cavies should not be exposed to high temperatures (above 79F). Do not put your guinea pig in direct sunlight or a drafty area.

Diet

VITAMIN C: Cavies cannot produce their own vitamin C and require 10 to 30 mg daily to prevent scurvy.

PLAIN HIGH-QUALITY TIMOTHY HAY GUINEA PIG PELLETS formulated with vitamin C (approximately 1/4 cup of pellets daily). Oxbow® is a good brand. Purchase pellets in small quantities and store in a cool, dry, and dark place to preserve the potency of the vitamin C (check the expiration date to assure freshness).

UNLIMITED GRASS HAY (timothy or orchard grass) to keep their digestive system running smoothly and keep their teeth from overgrowing. Alfalfa hay is fine for pregnant, nursing, and young cavies or malnourished adults, but because of high calcium content it should be reserved as a treat for the average adult cavy. Excess calcium could contribute to the formation of bladder stones.

FRESH COLD WATER in a drip bottle, changed daily. Do not add vitamins or medications to the water.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Small amounts of fresh vegetables (**about a cup a day**) are an important additional source of vitamin C and other nutrients. Introduce vegetables slowly, to avoid digestive upsets. Variety is the key to maintaining your pigs' health.

Stick to Red and green leaf lettuce.

NOTE: Romaine lettuce causes more calcium to be eliminated in their urine which can lead to urinary stones.

Occasional vegetables 15%:

Carrot (baby), one small
Broccoli leaves (tiny) and peeled broccoli stem
Green pepper, 1/8 to 1/4 of whole pepper
Chinese Cabbage (pak-choi), one leaf
Corn silks and husks when in season
Parsley, one or two sprigs
Forages like chickweed, dandelions, and young clover

Fruit 5%:

Banana, 1/4" round slice
Blueberries, several
Strawberries
Apple, thin wedge NO SEEDS
Apricot, 1/4
Cantaloupe, 1" X 2" piece with washed rind
Watermelon, 1" X 2" piece with washed rind
Grapes or Raisins (not both), one or two

One or Two little piggies?

Pairing two guinea pigs is determined by the personalities of the individuals rather than their gender. Some guinea pigs will fight with any pig you try to pair them with. Having a cage companion is important, especially if you are going to be away for a large part of the day. Pairing guinea pigs of the same sex is possible, females tend to do better with each other, but male and male is possible, if matched as babies or a baby and an adult guinea pig. Introductions should be made in an open area, watching closely for an hour or so. If they seem to be getting along well, they can be moved to a freshly cleaned cage (the larger, the better, as it will improve the odds of making a successful pairing). Watch them closely for another hour or so to make sure they continue to get along. Immediately separate fighting guinea pigs with a towel to avoid being bitten. Male and female can be paired too. If breeding is not wanted, neutering the male cavy is important. **BE AWARE: Males are sexually mature at 3 ½ Weeks of age, and females can get pregnant as young as 4 weeks. Breeding often reduces the lifespan of female guinea pigs and starting to breed after 8 months of age can be very dangerous for a female guinea pig. The cause of this is the normal stiffening of the symphysis (a joint of tough fibrous cartilage between the 2 pubic bones of the pelvis) when the female reaches adulthood. Sows who reach adulthood without a prior pregnancy may not be able to deliver their young normally. Cesarean sections are rarely successful in guinea pigs even when performed by a veterinarian who has experience with guinea pigs.**