

ANIMAL TALK
6514 ROOSEVELT WAY N.E.
SEATTLE WASHINGTON 98115
(206) 526-1558
ANMTLK@AOL.COM
WWW.ANIMAL-TALK.COM
FACEBOOK.COM/ANIMALTALKPETSHOP



Guinea Pig

Cavia porcellus

Necessities:

- Cage
- Carefresh bedding
- Oxbow food
- Hay alfalfa/timothy
- Food dish
- Water bottle
- Mineral lick
- Chew sticks
- Place to hide/sleep
- Vitamin C Tablets

Extras:

- 12.5" Guinea pig ball
- Toys
- Litter box/litter
- Hammock
- Harness/leash

General:

Originally from South America, these little creatures have traveled into the hearts of many people. They are active, energetic, vocal and lovable. With a life span of 8-10 years, they are truly a companion pet. In the wild they are always on the move grazing for food; that is why their babies are born with their eyes open and eating solid food, although they need to nurse on mom for about 3-4 weeks. Their gestation period is about 68 days and they usually have 2-3 babies but occasionally 4-5. Female guinea pigs can become pregnant as early as 5 weeks of age but it is not recommended to breed them before 12 weeks of age. Also important: females, if they are to be bred, should be pregnant before they are 6 months of age as their pelvis fuses, making it difficult to birth their babies. Although guinea pigs are very social creatures and live in small herds in the wild, adult males are territorial and will sometimes fight even if they have been raised together. We strongly recommend spaying and neutering of guinea pigs as it allows males and females to live together. Spaying and neutering also increases the life span of your pet by reducing health problems such as pyometra, mammary gland tumors, ovarian cancer, testicular cancer, etc.

Handling/Exercise:

Guinea pigs are very vocal and love to talk. They learn to recognize the sound of the refrigerator door, your car or any sound that is associated with food and/or attention. When handling a guinea pig make sure to support all of their feet; they do not like heights. We recommend that younger children sit down on the floor and let the guinea pig sit in their lap. Remember not to stick your fingers too close to their mouth as they nibble on everything to see if it's food. They are so social that the more time you spend with them the more affectionate they will be. They can be litter box trained and a great playpen for them is a large plastic wading pool that can be easily cleaned and moved around the house.

Housing & Bedding:

We always recommend that they be kept inside, away from predators, and kept warm. Caging should be at least 18X 30 inches with a solid floor (NO RAISED WIRE FLOORS) with plenty of ventilation. BIGGER is always better. They are ground animals that require room to move. Although they love to run loose in your home, they are very destructive and mischievous and should be kept confined when they cannot be supervised. Carefresh is our preferred bedding but pine or white shavings (never cedar) shavings can be used on the bottom. The cage should be placed away from direct sunlight, drafts, heat vents or air-conditioning. Although normal room temperatures (68-70 degrees) are fine for adults, we recommend a warmer area for babies (72-74 degrees). If there is shelving in the cage it should be solid so that their feet cannot fall through. The cage should be cleaned out entirely at least once a week, cleaned with a 10% bleach and water solution and rinsed thoroughly. Guinea pigs will generally choose one corner to go potty in and this corner can be cleaned daily to help reduce odor. Or you can even potty train your pig by placing a small litter pan with some kitty litter in their chosen corner.

Diet:

The diet should consist of a balanced Guinea pig pellet (NOT RABBIT PELLETS). We use and recommend Oxbow diets. They have a formula for babies and for adult pigs. Guinea pigs need high amounts of vitamin C each day: they, like us, do not make their own. Oxbow foods are formulated with a stable vitamin C in the appropriate amounts for them. Supplemental vitamin C can also be given in the ratio of 50 milligrams to 8 oz of water. Alfalfa hay (for babies) or timothy and orchard grass (for adults) should always be available. Vegetables that are rich with vitamin C should also be given. Guinea pigs should get lots of fresh veggies and fruits each day, such as: Apples, strawberries, bananas, kiwi, melons, citrus fruit, grapes, green leaf and romaine lettuce (NO ICEBERG LETTUCE), carrots, carrot greens, sweet red peppers, cilantro, parsley and dandelion greens. DO NOT give them rhubarb, germinating potatoes, uncooked beans, celery, shelled nuts & seeds (because of choking hazards) and dairy products.

Heating & Lighting

Guinea pigs do not require extra heat as long as your house doesn't get below 65 degrees and they have plenty of bedding to nest in. They also do not require extra lighting other than the ambient light in the room, but it should be light during the day and dark at night to allow for a normal sleep and eating cycle.

Health & Wellbeing:

They are a very hardy animal with relatively few known health problems other than getting too cold, dehydration or toxic reactions due to airborne toxins. We use specialist Dr. Karen Obegi at 206-365-1102.