

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

Hamster – Syrian

Nymphicus hollandicus



Necessities:

- Cage
- Bedding
- Food dish
- Water bottle
- Mineral lick

- Chew sticks
- Wheel
- Place to hide/sleep
- Hamster food

Extras:

- Hamster ball
- Toys
- Treats

General:

The hamster's chubby fluffy appearance makes it one of the most instantly loved pets around. Syrians are the larger type of hamster. As a nocturnal animal, hamsters become active in the evenings when you are home to enjoy them. They perform cute antics and feats of wonder in their homes and, with the proper patience and care, they can be cuddled and loved. Their average life span is 3-4 years. They MUST be kept singly. Animal Talk hamsters come from Holmden Hill Hamsters, a private breeder, who handles her pups from birth. They come with their pedigree complete with parentage, birthdate and picture.

Handling/Exercise:

Hamsters are naturally nocturnal, solitary creatures and don't require much handling, but they do tolerate being cuddled as long as you spend time taming and interacting with them. Their eyesight is very poor during the day. We recommend that you move slowly and speak softly when picking up or waking up your hamster. Parents should ALWAYS supervise children when they are handling their hamster (especially very young children). Sometimes it is beneficial to use an empty coffee cup to scoop up the hamster and then gently place it in their hands. A fall from a standing child's hands can be deadly. Please DO NOT use hand sanitizers before handling. Soap and water is the best and recommended before handling, so there are no food smells on the children's hands.

Hamsters are very active little rodents, so unless yours has a very large cage, he/she needs to come out for exercise as often as possible. The easiest way to do this is to use a hamster ball and let your pet roam around, making sure he/she doesn't have access to any stairs and any other pets in the home won't be a danger.

Housing & Bedding:

A hamster can be housed in a cage no smaller than a ten gallon tank or equivalent. Remember, they run up to 2 or 3 miles per night and they will use all the space they can get. The type of cage you choose is up to personal preference, but there are pros and cons to every type. Tanks can be used, but only if cleaned very regularly (twice a week is best) because they do not provide as much ventilation as wire cages and the urine builds up phenols which are toxic to their upper respiratory systems. The nice thing about tanks is they keep the hamster safe from other house pets and provide a better chance for burrowing/nesting because the bedding can be deeper. Wire cages are good options because they provide more ventilation, but the bar spacing must be no more than 1/2" or less for young animals so they can't escape. A good combination is a 10 gallon tank with a wire cage topper so they can burrow and sleep in the tank while still getting plenty of fresh air and exercise in the wire portion. Hamsters are clumsy: if your cage is tall, make sure that your bedding is deep enough that if he/she falls that it does not get injured. When cleaning the cage a 10% bleach solution works best. Our favorite bedding for hamsters is Carefresh, but Aspen shavings can also be used. Pine bedding is okay only if changed at least twice a week as phenols can build up more quickly and are toxic to small animals. NEVER use cedar shavings! They tend to choose one corner to urinate in and this can be scooped out daily. Some hamsters can be litter box trained and litter such as Crown bedding can be used in the litter box, but it isn't soft or comfortable enough to be used as bedding.

Diet:

Hamsters are omnivorous, meaning they eat both vegetation and animal fat. As is true with most animals, a varied diet is important for the health of your hamster. If you purchase your new pet from Animal Talk, he/she has most likely been eating a mixture of rodent seeds. You should always find out what your new pet has been used to eating and start with that before changing the diet. We recommend switching to Mazuri hamster pellets or Oxbow Healthy Handfuls so your hamster can't pick and choose the less healthy parts of the diet, but both foods must be mixed and switched slowly to be sure your hamster eats the new type. When you first bring your new pet home, he should be offered as much food as he wants (especially as a baby). Once they are six months old, the amount of food you offer should depend on the body condition and activity level of your pet. You can increase exercise if your hamster is overweight, but otherwise they should always have fresh food and water. Any diet should always be supplemented with fresh foods, including vegetables and dark leafy greens. Fruit, tofu, cooked/unseasoned chicken, and commercial hamster treats should be used as occasional treats. Like all rodents their teeth are constantly growing and must be kept worn down. Giving them hard chew treats will help with this.

Heating & Lighting

Hamsters 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. If your house does get cold and you'd like to heat the cage, a reptile under-tank heater will work for a glass tank (this does not work on plastic cages), but should be placed only on one end of the tank so your pet can choose to be warmer or colder.

Hamsters 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.