

# Care Guide

## Guinea Pig (cavia porcellus)

### Facts:

Average adult size: **8 to 11 inches long**  
Average life span: **up to 8 yrs with proper care**  
Diet: **Herbivore**



Guinea pigs are social companion animals that require daily interaction. They communicate by making various sounds that have different meanings, and “popcorn” or jump in the air when happy.

### Feeding & Nutrition:

#### Food

- High-quality guinea pig food, timothy hay and limited amounts of vegetables and fruits.
- Do not feed chocolate, caffeine or alcohol as these can cause serious medical conditions. Avoid sugar, food and treats high in carbohydrates and high fat treats.

#### Supplements

- Require 30-50 mg of vitamin C daily from vitamin supplements or citrus fruit.

#### Water

- Fresh water should be provided daily in water bottles to prevent contamination.
- Bottles need to be kept clean inside by soaking in a 10% bleach solution for ten minutes every two to three weeks and then scrubbed out with soap and a bottle brush. Bottles should be completely replaced with new ones every six months.

#### Frequency of Food

- Fresh food, timothy hay and water should always be available.
- Limited amounts of vegetables and fruits can be given daily.
- Vegetables and fruits not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded.
- Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake.

### Housing:

#### Cage

- Guinea pigs acclimate well to average household temperatures, not to exceed 80° F; be cautious of extreme temperature changes. The habitat should never be in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.
- An approximately 30”Lx15”Wx15”H, escape proof habitat with solid surface area and plenty of room for exercise and play makes a good home for a guinea pig.
- It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- Guinea pigs may be kept in same-sex pairs if they are raised together, otherwise, keep adult guinea pigs housed separately.
- **Different types of small animals should not be housed together.**

#### Bedding

- 1-2 inches of bedding should be placed in the habitat
- Proper bedding includes high quality paper bedding, crumbled paper bedding, or aspen

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shavings.

- Avoid Cedar-based products.

## Habitat Maintenance

- Clean the habitat and its contents at least once a week with mild soap and water, rinse and dry completely before placing back into the habitat.
- Remove wet spots daily; change bedding at least once a week, or more often as necessary.

## Care:

### Grooming & Hygiene

- Guinea pigs stay clean and rarely need baths, but can be spot cleaned with a damp washcloth or waterless shampoo, if needed. Fur may be brushed with a soft-backed brush.
- Trim nails every 6 weeks or more often as necessary.
- Consult a veterinarian if a guinea pig's teeth seem too long.

### Health

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Healthy fur and clear eyes
- Breathing is clear and walks normally
- Communicates by squeaking
- It is normal for a guinea pig's teeth to be yellow; cleaning is not necessary.

### Normal Behavior

- Easy to handle; prefers a routine and similar time for playing, feeding and resting each day.
- Hides in objects, but will come out when people are near the habitat.
- Chews on objects to maintain all their teeth, which grow continuously; ensure they have plenty of chew sticks available.

## Recommended Supplies:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Size Habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> Hide                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedding                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Chew Sticks or Blocks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High-quality Food        | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Harness and Leash     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food bowl/Water bottle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor playpen        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin C Supplement     | <input type="checkbox"/> Waterless Shampoo     |

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