

Cotton Top Tamarin Care Sheet



Tamarins (*Saguinus/Leontopithecus*) are small monkeys that live in the forest. They range in colors from black, brown or red. The Cottontop tamarin was named because of its elegant white fur that flows over its head and shoulders.

Average Lifespan: Up to 20 Years. **Size at Adulthood :** 6 – 7 inches (body)

Diet: Marmoset canned food, fruits, and a source of protein like insects or mealworms. They must also have calcium added to their diet by giving them a slice of orange 3 times a week.

Minimum Cage size: You can have a relatively small cage for your tamarin as long as they get time outside of the cage for exercise. The bigger is always better.

What is a Tamarin?

Tamarin's are a member of the primate family and are a small breed of monkeys. These monkeys are semi messy animals and can be somewhat trained to defecate in a given area. Their urine has a strong odor, and some people will use special monkey diapers. They scent their areas by rubbing their perineum's over everything: toys, food dishes, bedding, stuffed animals, furniture, rugs and caging.

They are intelligent and need stimulation. Interaction can be supplemented with toys, but if a tamarin is kept as a pet by themselves, it will rely on the human family to become its family group.

Monkeys cannot be expected to be "well-behaved". They will become bored and unhappy if confined to a small cage all day long with little to no interaction. It is a must to provide a play area or a tall outdoor enclosure in which they can climb high, the way they would in the wild.

Monkeys are happy only when they can fulfill their social and emotional needs. They need other social animals like them, they need to feel loved and protected and generally long for genuine affection. It is a mistake to think of them as cats, dogs or hamsters.

Monkeys have complex emotional needs, a high level of intelligence and are likely to live a long life.

Facts:

They do have scent glands and they should be spayed or neutered or the scent and urine can be very foul especially if kept indoors.

No vaccinations are needed however your vet may want to give vaccinations. Please be sure they have experience with primates before they treat them.

Playful with ferrets and dogs, will get along with most cats. Keep an eye for playful fighting as tamarins are very small and dogs can get carried away and may hurt them accidentally.

Generally the tamarin will bond with everyone in the house that handles it regularly. It is usually not severely agitated by strangers and may go to them freely, some are more shy but not generally aggressive.

Many tamarin owners do not even have a cage for them and let them run around loose like a dog. I would recommend that you baby proof your house and provide a safe environment for them to run free. This can be done all day long.

Negative Aspects of Owning a Tamarin:

Although they don't throw their poop, Tamarins will hang on the side of the cage and pee out of the cage.

A pet tamarin can easily contract human diseases, such as the common cold. A human virus can be transmitted to the marmoset when it licks a plate or spoon, previously used by a human or by close contact with the owner.

When they become sexually active, some marmosets can be really nasty and aggressive.

It is very important that a tamarin should never be kept in isolation, because it is an extremely social animal.

They require special marmoset food that must be special ordered online or found at a specialty store.

Preparing for your Tamarin:

Before you bring your Tamarin home, you should have its habitat and cage ready before you get it, you also need to baby proof your house. Be prepared to spend several hours per day the first few weeks to get accustomed to your tamarin and let them get comfortable with you.

Remember to locate a vet experienced with exotics and that is willing to see your baby **BEFORE** you get your baby. Have your vet give a general examination and let them get familiar with you and your baby in case of an emergency or routine visits in the future. You should take your baby in yearly for annual checkups.

Recommended Veterinarian:

Dr. Gosney, D.V.M
2055 Scott Blvd
Temple, TX 76504
(254) 773-1411

Caring for Infants:

The infancy stage lasts until about five months of age and is followed by the juvenile period, which lasts between five and 10 months.

- Enfamil Preemie (Formula)
- Must be fed every 3 hours (5 to 6 times a day) with a dropper
- 3 to 5 ml to start and increase as they will eat more

Infants must be placed on a heating pad at all times.

- Offer a bowl in cage with goats milk starting June 2.
- You **MUST** wash hands **BEFORE** and **AFTER** Handling.
- They are fragile at this age do **NOT** handle too much.
- Do not let anyone that has fever blisters or feeling sick handle **AT ALL!**
- You **MUST** find a vet for care for Primates.