

# Care Guide

## Syrian Hamster (mesocricetus auratus)

### Facts:

Average adult size: **4 - 5 inches long**  
Average life span: **2 to 3 yrs with proper care**  
Diet: **Omnivore**



Short-haired, long-haired, and hairless hamsters are clean and captivating companion animals that are best kept individually.

### Feeding & Nutrition:

#### Food

- High-quality Hamster food
- Treats (limited amounts of grains, 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.

#### 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 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

- Hamsters 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.
- Habitat should be plastic, metal or glass, escape proof with solid bottom; there should be plenty of room for the hamster to exercise and play.
- Openings between the wires should be small enough so the habitat is escape-proof.
- It is best to provide the largest habitat possible.
- House adult hamsters 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 shavings.
- Avoid Cedar-based products.

**Note:** The information in this Care Guide is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

# Care Guide



## 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

- Hamsters stay clean and rarely need baths, but can be spot cleaned with a damp washcloth or unscented baby wipes, if needed.
- Hamsters enjoy an occasional dust bath.
- Hairless hamsters benefit from a small amount of unscented baby oil rubbed into their skin to keep it soft.
- Consult with a veterinarian if a hamster's teeth seem too long.
- Nails should be cut every 8 to 12 weeks.

### Health

- Active and social when awake
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Healthy fur and clear eyes
- Breathing is clear and walks normally
- It is normal for a hamster's teeth to be yellow; cleaning is not necessary

### Normal Behavior

- Play during the night and rest during the day (nocturnal) but can adjust to your schedule.
- Easy to handle but may nip if suddenly awakened from a nap or startled.
- Chews on objects to maintain incisor teeth, which grow continuously; ensure have plenty of wood chew sticks.

## Recommended Supplies:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate Size Habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> Hide          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedding                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hammock       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High-quality Food        | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Treats                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Chews    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food bowl/Water bottle   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Chews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nesting Fluff            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust Bath     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise Wheel           | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust          |

**Note:** The information in this Care Guide is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please contact your veterinarian as appropriate.