

PETS 'N' STUFF

Your Guinea Pig

ORIGINS

The Guinea Pig originated in South America. There are three types, short, long, and rough coated, which are further sub-divided by coat colours and hair textures. They are little pack animals and enjoy company, but remember that two boars will usually only get on with each other if they have been brought up together from young.

LIFE SPAN & BREEDING

Their life span is about four to seven years. Females mature at about four to five weeks and males at eight to ten weeks. Females can be bred from six months but never later than ten months. If a sow hasn't bred by this age do not breed from her at all, since the pelvic bones fuse together by the time the Guinea Pig is one year old. The gestation period is sixty to seventy-two days with the average being 65 days. An average litter will have two to six babies and they are weaned at three to three and a half weeks. Babies are born with their eyes open and can eat solid food on the first day.

HANDLING

Guinea Pigs make wonderful pets; they rarely bite or scratch and are very sociable and affectionate little animals. They like to be handled correctly and frequently and are very talkative. They can be kept inside or outside as long as the

hutch is draught free and weatherproofed. When you get your Guinea Pig home he will be a bit stressed, keep him quiet for a day or two and keep handling to a minimum. After this handle him as much as possible. You should groom your Guinea Pig regularly, perhaps even every day for the longhaired varieties. They love this and it gives you a chance to check their nails and teeth and that all is well.



DIET

His diet should consist of dried food, which you will get from us when you buy your Guinea Pig. Guinea Pigs cannot store vitamin C and need to get some every day. You should add ¼ tablet of effervescent Vitamin C (available from any chemist) to the water daily. Our Guinea Pig Mix has this added, but they also need fresh fruit and vegetables. Raw beetroot, carrot, cucumber, tomatoes, melon, grapes, and strawberries, are all usually liked and make sure there is always a supply of fresh water. Hay is consumed in large quantities by Guinea Pigs and

should always be readily available; in winter you can also use dried grass. Avoid lettuce, potatoes, and apples. Greens should be fed very sparingly as they may cause a tummy upset. If this should happen, feed only hay and water until it clears up.

HOUSING

You will need a hutch or cage for your Guinea Pig. If you can, bring your pet indoors in the winter, they do not like the cold much and will do much better even in a garage or shed. Shavings are a good base for the bottom of the hutch. Don't line with newspapers — the ink is toxic. Always put plenty of hay in for your Guinea Pigs, they will burrow into it and this helps them to keep warm. Never give them straw for bedding as it may cause problems with their eyes. Remember the hutch needs to be cleaned out every week.

HEALTH

Guinea Pigs should be alert, with a bright shiny coat and clear bright eyes. They are naturally timid animals and will run when disturbed. If he is listless, has diarrhoea, is sneezing (he can catch colds from you), wheezing, or coughing, seek advice immediately. Don't be tempted to put it off for a few days.



What You Need

Guinea Pig Food, Hay, Shavings, Water Bottle, Feeding Dish, Hutch or Cage, Disinfectant, Brush, Salt or Mineral Lick, and if you're new to Guinea Pigs, a Book on Guinea Pig Care. That's it, and we can supply the lot!

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Guinea Pig Care



Opening Hours

Monday to Friday 9.15am - 5.15pm

(Closed for Lunch 1.15pm - 2.00pm)

Saturday 9.15am - 5.00pm

Sunday Closed

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