

Chinchillas as pets

Chinchillas make great pets for older children and adults. They're easy to look after, friendly and inquisitive.

With plenty of care and attention they can become very tame. Chinchillas are timid by nature and are very sensitive to rough handling so they're not suitable pets for very young children.

As they're nocturnal, chinchillas sleep throughout the day and become active in the evening. Keeping chinchillas as pets is a long-term commitment as they can live between 15-20 years.

Chinchillas like company!

Whilst chinchillas can be kept on their own, keeping them in single sex pairs provides them with companionship and it means they can snuggle up with each other at nap times.

If you'd like to keep more than one chinchilla, make sure you buy them at the same time as they'll already be friends. It can be difficult to introduce chinchillas to one another later on.

What should your Chinchilla eat?

Good quality chinchilla pellets will provide a good basic diet.

A supply of good quality hay, such as Timothy Hay, should always be readily available in your chinchillas cage. Hay provides essential fibre and helps chinchillas to digest their food. It also helps to grind their teeth down, preventing them from growing too long and becoming painful.

Chinchillas always appreciate treats but it is important to ensure that they are low in sugar and fats. Dried fruit or vegetables and breakfast cereals can also be given but only in very small quantities as they can be high in sugar.

Secure their feeding bowl onto the cage or provide heavy earthenware bowls to avoid them being tipped over.

Remove uneaten food and ensure that their feeding bowls and bottles are cleaned and refilled daily.



Where should your chinchilla live?

Chinchillas are very active and need lots of space to exercise so buy the biggest cage you can afford. Ideally, the cage should have several levels or shelves to allow your pets to bounce around their cage.

As chinchillas are enthusiastic chewers, a wire mesh cage is essential to ensure that they can't chew their way out.

Provide a bedroom or a space where they can snuggle up - a nesting box full of hay or other cosy bedding material will help them feel secure.

Position their cage away from direct sunlight, radiators or draughts. Chinchillas don't like high temperatures and can suffer from heat stroke which can be very serious if not treated quickly.

A chinchilla marble is great for keeping your pets cool in warm weather. Cool the marble in your fridge and then pop it in their cage for a long-lasting cool spot.





Keeping them fit and healthy

A healthy diet and hygienic conditions will help to keep your chinchillas in good health but there are a few potential problems that you should be aware of.

As with all rodents, chinchillas' teeth grow constantly so it's important to provide hay and wooden toys or mineral stones for gnawing on. Cuttlebone is also great to gnaw on and provides calcium too. Regular 6 monthly check up's at the vets will ensure their teeth are in perfect condition

Chinchillas like to keep their soft fur clean and love a good dust bath! It may seem unusual but bathing in special chinchilla dust is a vital part of their grooming routine. Place a chinchilla bath filled with dust in their cage and leave it in for about five minutes at a time. Your pets should bathe several times a week to keep their coat shiny and clean. Take care not to leave the bath in their cage as they may use it as a toilet.

Regularly grooming your pets with a brush or comb will strengthen the bond between you and will help to keep their coats in good condition.

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Chinchilla's



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