

## Is this the right pet for me?

Guinea pigs are small tailless rodents also known as cavies. Best kept in pairs or small groups, these vocal little creatures make wonderful low maintenance pets that rarely scratch or bite. If you get a friend for your guinea pig, make sure it is of the same sex or at least one of the pair is desexed. Guinea pigs are quite hardy and can be kept indoors or outdoors, but you do need to spend time with them each day so that they remain healthy. Handle your guinea pig often and it will happily sit on your lap for cuddles.

## Recommended for...

- People with some time to spend each day with their guinea pigs
- Singles, couples and families with young or school-aged children
- Apartment dwellers

## Lifespan

6-8 years

## Feeding

Your guinea pig's diet should be high in roughage and contain a wide variety of fresh greens and fruits to supply vitamin C each day. Feed your guinea pigs specially formulated guinea pig pellets, fresh hay (grass, lucerne or oaten), and fresh fruit and vegetables (never frozen) e.g. carrot, broccoli, cucumber, tomato, capsicum, melons, parsley, pumpkin, corn, marrow, stone fruits, parsley, strawberries, pineapple (including green tops and skin) and cauliflower. Oranges and apples can be fed as small wedges. Guinea pigs also like to nibble on weeds such as dandelions, couch grass and milk thistles. Limit nuts, dried fruit, lettuce and cabbage, as these can cause stomach upsets. Avoid feeding rhubarb, spinach, beetroot and any vegetables from the turnip family, as these can be toxic in guinea pigs. Any left-overs should be removed before new food is added. Always provide plenty of fresh, cool water especially in summer.

## NEW GUINEA PIG CHECKLIST

Here's a list of the essentials you'll need for your Guinea Pig. Please ask any of the Best Friends team to help you with your selections.

### Essential equipment

- Guinea pig cage and bedding
- Feed dish or a bowl which attaches to the side of the cage
- Heavy ceramic water bowl or a bottle which attaches to the side of the cage
- Hay net
- Mineral stone for tooth care

### Your guinea pigs will also love...

A changing selection of cubby houses, sleeping sacks, wooden objects, cardboard boxes and tunnels to hide and play in.

# Caring for your Guinea Pig



## Special Offer:



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## Kids Care

Children need to understand the need for gentle and calm handling before being allowed to handle guinea pigs and should be supervised to avoid problems. With a very young child, an adult should pick up the guinea pig and place it on a folded towel on the child's lap.

## Housing

Your guinea pigs need a warm, dry and clean cage which can be kept indoors or outdoors. A hinged roof makes access for cleaning easier. Guinea pigs love to run around, chase each other and play little games between themselves, so the larger the cage the better. It also needs to keep them cool on hot days. It is very important that the cage is raised off the ground, placed in a cool and shady spot in summer and protected from the wind and rain in winter. Guinea pigs are prone to heat stress, so in very hot weather cover the cage with damp towels or bring it indoors.

Guinea pigs need a raised sleeping area covered with a layer of shredded newspaper 5mm thick and then a layer of wood shavings or chips.

Remove and replace soiled bedding every day and clean out the whole hutch and disinfect it with a pet safe disinfectant once a week. A ramp from the ground



level up to the sleeping compartment provides them with extra exercise throughout the day. Remember that guinea pigs need a source of hay to eat so make sure they have a hay net or bundle of hay to munch on at all times. Cage accessories and cubby houses should be arranged in the middle of the cage with adequate room to run around the outside of these items.

## Handling

Guinea pigs will become quite tame if handled regularly. Once your guinea pig is used to being gently stroked, you can pick it up with both hands, one under its chest, with your fingers either side of the front legs and the other gently holding its back. Hold it gently but firmly and keep it close to your body.

## Exercise

Daily exercise is very important to the health and happiness of your guinea pigs. Provide a safe, large area for your guinea pigs to run around and explore, either indoors or outside in a secure, enclosed pen. If your guinea pigs are loose in the house, protect areas that they may get into but can't get out of, like behind refrigerators, inside chairs or sofas, or behind immovable shelving. Make sure that all electric cords are out of reach as guinea pigs love to chew them.

## Health

Guinea pigs kept in clean bedding, with regular good quality food, generally don't have too many health problems. External parasites can be very irritating or even fatal to guinea pigs. If you have any concerns about your guinea pig, you can go to the Our Vet™ counter in store and talk to the team.

**Desexing:** Desexing is recommended as desexed guinea pigs are generally healthier and will have fewer odours.

**Emergency Treatment during the guarantee period:** If your guinea pig develops diarrhoea which persists for more than 24 hours, or becomes severe, or has any other health problems during the guarantee period please, contact the team at Our Vet™ in store.

## Responsible pet ownership

In some areas there are restrictions on the number and types of pets you are allowed to keep. Check with your local government for further information on your rights and responsibilities.



**Best Friends Pet Guarantee:** At Best Friends Pet SuperCentre we take the utmost care of all animals living under our roof to ensure they are happy and healthy whilst in our care. After purchase, if you are not satisfied with the health of your new pet or you are having second thoughts on pet ownership, you can return your pet to us with the receipt within 14 days of purchase for vet treatment\*, refund or replacement pet†. We are unable to provide a refund for any equipment you purchased and have used for your pet during this time. \* Vet treatment includes 1 free consultation and appropriate treatment for illnesses that are considered by OurVet™ to have been present in the pet and have further developed after the pet was sold. New illnesses and injuries that have occurred after the pet was sold are not covered. Treatments provided are at the sole discretion of Best Friends & OurVet™. †Replacement Pets are offered at the same value as original pet purchased.