



BEST WEST PET FOODS

“Your Pet Food Experts”



CHINCHILLAS

Chinchillas are nocturnal herbivores and are a clean and practically odorless animal. Chinchillas weigh 18 to 30 ounces or more and can live up to 20 years of age. The fur of this animal is incredibly soft and plush.

Females are typically larger than males. When fully grown, they measure approximately 12 inches (120 cm).

Chinchillas are an easy care and simple feeding animal, which love to climb and are natural acrobats. Chinchillas are a very sociable animal and it should be considered to own them in pairs.

FOOD AND TREATS

The chinchilla diet is simple. The animal should be fed chinchilla pellets **ONLY** at the rate of two tablespoons daily or 1/3 cup. The pellets must be supplemented with loose hay or hay cubes, the timothy variety being the best choice. Minimize such goodies as fresh fruit and vegetables, as the natural balance of the digestive system can be disturbed. Small pieces of fruit and vegetables can be fed 2-3 times a week. **DO NOT FEED** cabbage, corn or lettuce as these vegetables cause gas and ultimately death.

In giving treats, such as dried fruit, do not give more than 2 pieces per day. Choose to give either dried fruits or nuts, not both. In other words, choose **ONLY** one type of treat to give a day. Treats are to be given in **SMALL** quantities.

TIP

All chinchillas respond to voices and get frightened if you yell or speak too loudly. Speak kindly to your chin every time you enter the room so that he or she knows you are there and can get used to and feels comfortable with your voice.

HOUSING

Chinchilla cages should ideally be all metal, as chinchillas tend to chew plastic bottoms. Do remember to provide the animal with a sleeping box or container for it to rest its feet from the wire. They are very active and like to jump. The cage should have multi-levels to satisfy their natural urge to hop and climb. Physical and social stimulation outside of the cage is a needed routine on a daily basis.

BEDDING

There are different types of bedding available like kiln-dried white pine shavings, cat litter, aspen fresh and so on. **AVOID** cedar or redwood shavings. You should change the litter and clean the cage and everything in it thoroughly, at least once a week.



BATHING

Chinchillas are very clean animals that love to bathe and it's really fun to watch them do it! Chins bathe by rolling around in a special dust bath. This helps to remove oil from their fur and keep it fluffy and clean. **Never clean a chin using soap and water.**

Place about one to two inches of dust in a glass, pottery, or metal container. Make sure that whatever container you use allows your chin plenty of room to twist and turn about. Leave the dust bath in your chin's cage for about 10-20 minutes at least twice a week (You can give them a bath daily if you want to.)

TIP

If you are having difficulty catching your chin, try getting it to come and get a raisin from your hand or getting it to jump in a dust bath. Most chins can't resist taking a dust bath.



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THINGS I NEED TO GET STARTED

- CAGE
- WATER BOTTLE
- FOOD DISH
- UNSCENTED WOOD SHAVINGS
- CHINCHILLA DUST
- CHINCHILLA PELLETS
- PLASTIC HOUSE

TIP

Chinchillas are very susceptible to heat stroke, even in 80-degree weather and especially in humid climates! Heat stroke is probably the number one killer of pet chins.



TOYS

Chinchillas need to have things to chew on, both to keep them entertained and to keep their teeth from growing too long which can lead to major problems. Good choices would include uncolored, untreated wooden bird toys (which can be hung from their cage), pine chewing blocks, or uncolored, unflavored, small rawhide dog bones.

DISEASES AND REMEDIES

Respiratory diseases are often seen in pet chinchillas. The respiratory problem can easily become pneumonia. Conditions such as overcrowding and poor ventilation can lead to high difficulty in breathing, nasal discharge, and swollen lymph nodes. Symptoms of bacterial infections can be and are not limited to diarrhea, loss of appetite and weight, nasal discharge, and difficulty breathing.

The teeth of chinchillas grow continuously throughout life. Either the front teeth or back teeth can overgrow. Signs of overgrown teeth include drooling and a depressed appetite. Overgrown incisors are easily noticed upon inspection of the mouth.

Diarrhea is not a disease but rather a sign of disease. Rodents, being a pet whose digestive system is designed to digest a large amount of fiber, easily develop diarrhea due to changes in diet, incorrect usage of antibiotics, stress, and diets low in fiber or high in fat and protein.