

## Common Breed



### **Chinchilla:**

Life span: Up to 15 years

Size: 23 – 25cm body plus 15cm tail

With gentle handling from a young age most chinchillas will become quite tame and bond closely with their owners, although sometimes they do not like to be held or cuddled. They are very active and playful. Chinchillas can be kept individually, and usually will do fine as same sex pairs especially if they are litter mates or introduced at a young age.

Owners need to move slowly and speak softly around chinchillas, as they are very skittish. It is best to limit interaction with chinchillas to the evenings, since that is when they are naturally more active and therefore more receptive.

Chinchillas come in a variety of colors including; standard grey, black velvet, beige, ebony, white, brown velvet, tan, afro-violet and sapphire.



## Supply list

Here's a list of the necessities you'll need to take home to help your new chinchilla stay healthy and happy. Please ask one of our pet experts to help you choose these items.

### **Home**

- ❖ Appropriate size and type of cage
- ❖ Aspen or other appropriate bedding
- ❖ Water bottle
- ❖ Food bowls
- ❖ Hiding house
- ❖ Dust bath container
- ❖ Chinchilla bath dust
- ❖ Exercise wheel

### **Food**

- ❖ Fortified chinchilla diet
- ❖ Timothy hay
- ❖ Apples, carrots or raisins
- ❖ Treat sticks and chews
- ❖ Alfalfa treats

### **Extras**

- ❖ Books and magazines
- ❖ Vitamin drops
- ❖ Exercise ball
- ❖ Cage cleaner and disinfectant  
(Read and follow label instructions)

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## **CHINCHILLAS**



**Scientific name:** *Chinchilla lanigera*

**For Ages:** 14 & up, with adult supervision

**Pet lifespan:** Up to 15 years

**Pet Size:** Approximately 23 – 25cm body plus 15cm tail

## Traits & Behavior

**Nocturnal:** Chinchillas like to run and play at night and sleep during the day, so be prepared for them to be active and noisy after dark. However, they can adapt to being active during the daytime.

**Social:** Chinchillas raised together can live together peacefully (house same gender pairs only). With regular, gentle handling, they will bond strongly with their owners.

**Clean:** Chinchillas keep their soft fur clean by taking a dust bath 2-3 times per week.

## Things to remember

**Lifting & Handling:** Handle chinchillas gently, scoop them up in both hands and hold them snugly against your body with cupped hands so they feel safe and secure. Remember to never grab their fur or tail, the hair will pull out.

**Nipping:** As you tame your chinchilla, be prepared for gentle, harmless nipping, as they use their mouths to become familiar with their environment.

**Temperature sensitive:** Chinchillas overheat easily, and should be kept in a cool environment.

**Safety & Cleanliness:** Please remember that all pets may bite or scratch, and may transmit a disease to humans. Keep your pet's home clean and wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning their home.

Infants, young children, pregnant women, people with compromised immune systems, and the infirm or elderly are at a greater risk of infections and should use caution when in contact with the pet or its habitat. Consult your doctor for more information.

## Nutrition

**Staple diet:** Choose a fortified chinchilla diet.

**Fruits & vegetables:** Treat your chinchilla to a small piece of apple or carrot, or two raisins every day.

**Hay:** A small handful of timothy hay daily adds fiber to your chinchilla's diet.

**Treats sticks & chews:** These hard and crunchy treats keep your chinchilla's front teeth trimmed – always keep one in their habitat.

**Water:** Change and fill your chinchilla's water bottle with clean water every day.

\*Remember that fresh food items require their own dish and should be removed from the habitat after four hours to avoid spoilage. Treats should be less than 10% of total food intake.



## Tip

If you're having difficulty catching your chinchilla, try getting them to come and get a raisin from your hand or getting them to jump in a dust bath. Most chinchillas can't resist taking a dust bath.

## Habitat

**Housing:** Chinchillas need a well-ventilated home with a solid floor, large enough for a food dish, water bottle, and a hiding house. There should be plenty of room for all cage accessories, and for them to move freely.

**Bedding:** Chinchillas love to dig, so keep lots of clean aspen or other appropriate bedding. Line home with 8-10cm of bedding, and change it weekly or more often if needed.

**Dust bath:** Add about 5cm of chinchilla bath dust to a container 2 - 3 times per week to let your chinchilla take a dust bath. The container should be large enough for them to flip and roll around in. Remove the container when the bath is done.

**Cage placement:** Place the habitat in a cool, low humidity area, out of direct sunlight.

## Health

### Signs of a healthy chinchilla:

- ❖ Clean, bright eyes
- ❖ Soft fur
- ❖ Eats and drinks normally
- ❖ Curious, active behavior
- ❖ Well-formed droppings with no diarrhea

### Things to watch for:

- ❖ Overgrown front teeth
- ❖ Bare patches in the fur
- ❖ Lethargic behavior
- ❖ Weight loss; not eating or drinking normally
- ❖ Labored breathing
- ❖ Diarrhea or discolored droppings
- ❖ Sneezing; discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth