

# Purchase Agreement

**Selling Party:**

Poppy Bee Hamstery

**Receiving Party:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Hamster: \_\_\_\_\_

Sire: \_\_\_\_\_

Dam: \_\_\_\_\_

Litter: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, purchaser of this hamster, agree to provide humane care as defined by our care guide. This includes providing an appropriately sized enclosure and running wheel, appropriate substrate and good quality food. I will ensure this hamster is treated gently and respectfully by all members of our household. If I am no longer able to care for this hamster, for any reason, I agree to return the hamster to Poppy Bee Hamstery.

**Selling Party Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

Poppy Bee Hamstery

Name of Signatory: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

**Receiving Party Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

# Hamster Care Guide

**Cages:** Most pet stores advertise and sell cages that are far too small for all hamster species. Habittrail or Crittertrail cages seem fun with the different colored tubes, but they never have the appropriate unbroken floor space, ventilation, or even space for a large enough wheel for Syrian hamsters. Many of us have used these cages (including myself at times), and while our hamsters may appear to be okay, they are not thriving. Hamsters are their healthiest when they have an enclosure with 450 square inches of unbroken floor space. One benefit of having a very large enclosure is you do not have to clean as often. Spot cleaning (hamsters typically choose one or two corners as a "bathroom") a couple times a week and one thorough clean out once a month is fine. I remove all substrate/bedding and use a wet wash cloth to clean out our cages once a month. Some people use a vinegar/water mix. I refrain from using harsh cleaners as this can create respiratory and skin problems for hamsters.

We sell bin cages for \$50, but you can also easily make your own. DIY bin cages are easy to clean, provide adequate ventilation, and meet the minimum unbroken floor space requirement.

**Substrate:** Aspen wood shavings are the only appropriate wood shavings to use. Other varieties, like pine or cedar, can create respiratory issues. Paper based shavings are fine too, like Carefresh brand bedding. I also typically shred my own tissues, paper towels and timothy hay or other kinds of hay, to give hamsters extra materials to make their sleeping nest. You should provide at least three inches of substrate to your enclosure, hamsters love to tunnel and burrow. Hamsters also love sand baths! You will need to bake play sand prior to using it to make it safe for hamsters.

**Food:** We recommend a high-quality rodent lab block (like Teklad or Mazuri rodent blocks). Higgins Sunburst seed mixes are great to mix in with rodent blocks or as a treat. Hamsters love protein (dried mealworms, cooked plain chicken, cooked unseasoned egg) a few times a week. Hamsters also love veggies- carrots, cucumber, broccoli, high nutrient greens like kale and spinach are great in moderation. Hamsters by nature hoard their food and often create a secret stash in one corner of their cage. You do not need to necessarily feed them daily but try to keep an eye on their supply. Remove fresh food daily if uneaten.

**Enrichment:** Hamsters love to run, play, and explore. An appropriately sized wheel to avoid painful back curvature (11 inches in diameter for a Syrian hamster) is a necessity. We prefer the Silent Spinner brand, but there are many good quality wheel brands on the market. The main features you should look for are a solid bottom, to protect tiny toes, and a sturdy design. Some wheels are noisier than others, so you may want to give it a "test run" before committing. Cardboard tubes, plastic or wood hideaways, low set ladders and plastic tubes and tunnels are great. Some hamsters enjoy chewing on cardboard or wood chewies sold at stores. "Whimzees" are a fun treat sold in pet stores normally advertised for dogs. Check out YouTube-there are a plethora of fun DIY enrichment toys you can make for your rodent friends using wooden popsicles and recycled items. If you are unsure about the safety of a store-bought item or DIY project, don't hesitate to reach out to us and we can advise you.

**Taming your hamster:** We make our best effort to breed for temperament and we handle our hamster pups regularly from the time their eyes begin to open at two weeks of age. Regardless, hamsters are prey animals, and they are naturally wary of strange sounds and smells. It may take some time for your new hamster to trust and appreciate your attention. Once they do trust you, they will often run up to your hand and try to climb up your arm.

Often hamsters will show cage aggression or nervousness, they are typically much more relaxed with you once they are out of the cage. Imagine if you were a tiny hamster and a strange hand was coming from up above to reach in and grab you! If you are trying to pick up your hamster from his cage, and he is running away from you, flipping over onto his back, baring or chattering teeth, let your hamster be for the moment. Come back later with a treat to offer or coax your hamster into a secure container and then pick him up using the container. It's silly, but the bathtub is a great safe place to get to know your pet. Place a towel on the bathtub floor, bring some treats or toys, sit down in the bathtub and let your hamster run around and explore.

Be careful! Hamster pups are super squirmy and jumpy! They tend to mellow out as they age. They WILL jump from your hands so make sure you have a secure hold and find a place to sit while holding your hamster. Small children need adult supervision to make sure your hamster does not get injured or unduly stressed.

**Vet Care:** Hamsters on occasion will need vet care. While they do not require vaccinations like cats or dogs, sometimes a hamster may get sick. We use Pender Vet Exotics and occasionally Parkway Veterinary Clinic. These vets are in Fairfax, VA. If you live elsewhere, you will need to research vets in your area that provide care of exotic pets.

#### **The Big No-No's of Hamster Care:**

- No tiny habitrail or crittertrail cages, find a good quality cage with at least 450 square inches of unbroken floor space and good ventilation
- No caging your hamster with other hamsters or other pets. Syrian hamsters are solitary and will fight to the death if caged with other hamsters.
- No Cedar or Pine wood shavings, they cause respiratory issues
- No "fluffy" or cotton bedding, it can wrap around small body parts and it can accidentally be swallowed (it's not easily digested)
- No mesh or spaced bottom running wheels, they can cause injuries to tiny feet
- No hay-based food, it doesn't provide appropriate nutrition

**Prevent a cage escape:** Hamsters will attempt to escape their cage, it's in their DNA. Make sure cages are securely closed every evening by double checking clasps and lids. Consider placing a heavy book over a lid to provide weight. Be on the lookout for cage damage. A well-designed cage will be difficult to chew a hole out of, but hamsters are clever.

#### **If your hamster escapes:**

- Don't fret, contact us! We have some good tricks up our sleeves for finding our escapee friends.