

# How to Care for Your...

# Guinea Pig

## Did you know?

- Guinea pigs are diurnal—and usually sleep mainly during the day but can also be active at night
- Unlike humans, guinea pigs cannot produce their own vitamin C
- Guinea pigs have a scent gland on their butt above their tail that appears like grease on their fur
- Most guinea pigs develop arthritis by 2 years old
- Guinea pigs cannot vomit like other animals
- **NEVER HOUSE A GUINEA PIG WITH/ NEAR A RABBIT— IT CAN BE DEADLY**
- Guinea pigs' teeth continually grow and if not properly maintained can cause dental disease

## Housing:

- Single level cages are best due to their long heavy bodies—they can break their backs—3 x 2 feet (6 square feet per guinea pig) is recommended
- Chloroplast flooring, newspaper and fleece blankets are the most common set up to provide the most space to run around
- A litter pan can be used with pine shavings
- Clean up poop daily and clean cage completely once weekly to prevent skin/foot diseases in your guinea pig
- Hiding/sleeping box should be provided at all times— one per guinea pig

## Care:

- Letting them run around the house is a great way for them to get exercise and prevent obesity
- Keep them cool, they can't handle temperatures above 80°F. It's best to avoid high temperatures and high humidity—some guinea's love to lay up against frozen water bottles!



## Nutrition:

- Provide access to hay 24/7. This can be timothy, orchard hay, or mixed— avoid alfalfa hay as this hay is high in calcium and can cause urinary bladder stones
- 1– 2 tablespoons of guinea pig pellets per day when young and wean off completely when older—Oxbow is a great brand for food
- **A GUINEA PIG CANNOT GO MORE THAN A DAY WITHOUT EATING—THIS CAN BE DEADLY**
- Vegetables are a great supplement, fruit can also be used for treats but to a lesser extent due to high sugar content
- Supplement with vitamin C— this can easily be done by providing an orange wedge every couple of days, by adding vitamin C to their water, or oxbow makes great treats/ supplements. Vitamin C degrades rapidly so if you add it to the water, replace it every other day at minimum
- Provide small water bowl or water bottle at all times

## TIME TO SEE THE VET WHEN...

A pet should always be brought into the Vet's office for yearly exams; however, if you notice your Guinea pig with any of these signs you should call your Veterinarian ASAP:

- Not eating
- Weight loss
- Rashes/wounds
- Fur loss
- Eye problems
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Issues urinating