

## *Guinea Pig Handling!*

There is nothing more precious than cuddling with your guinea pig but sometimes they make it hard to handle them!

1. The cuddliest of cavy's can be quite squirmy. When picking up your guinea pig place a hand in front of their chest and under their bum and lift them onto you. Sometimes you can have the guinea pig run into a towel or a cuddle cup to pick them up that way.
2. Due to their jumpy nature young children should not pick up or carry guinea pigs. A cavy can easily fall out of a child's arms and seriously hurt themselves.
3. Guinea pigs can be quite chatty! They make a variety of squeaking noises or a 'wheek'. You may find once you are holding your cavy they begin wheeking at you or purring in happiness.

## *What Else Should I Know?*

Try not to make your head spin with all of the information there is on guinea pigs!

Do your research and enjoy your little furry companion. Here are some links to help guide you in cavy ownership.

- <http://www.guinealynx.info/>
- <https://www.guineapigcages.com/>
- <http://www.cavyspirit.com/>
- [www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com)
- [www.smallpetselect.com](http://www.smallpetselect.com)
- [www.kmshayloft.com](http://www.kmshayloft.com)

*Have fun with your cavy companion!*



Flower City Critters  
Small Animal Rescue

[www.flowercitycrittersrescue.org](http://www.flowercitycrittersrescue.org)  
[flowercityrescue@gmail.com](mailto:flowercityrescue@gmail.com)

Guinea  
Pigs  
101



## Considering a Guinea Pig?

1. Guinea Pigs (also known as Cavy's) are wonderful and social companion pets! They live an average of 5 – 7 years.
2. They are funny and social animals that require daily interaction, play, and love to keep them from becoming lonely and bored.
3. Guinea pigs are gentle delicate animals requiring special handling.
4. Guinea pigs are considered an exotic pet and require yearly wellness exams with a cavy savvy vet.

## Let's talk about food!

A rabbits' diet should consist of 80% grass hay, 10% greens (vegetables), 5% pellets, and 5% healthy treats.

1. Grass hays would be: Timothy Hay, Orchard Grass, Meadow Hay, Botanical Hay, Oat Hay, and Alfalfa Hay\* (alfalfa is only for babies up to 1 year old or pregnant females!)
2. Hay needs to be available 24/7 just like fresh water. A guinea pig needs to constantly eat hay to keep their gut moving and naturally keep their teeth trim.
3. A quality **timothy** based pellet without added corn, dried fruits,

nuts, or seeds provides them with necessary vitamins & minerals.

4. Guinea pigs **cannot** eat rabbit pellets! Cavy's need pellets fortified with Vitamin C. Rabbit pellets also sometimes contain antibiotics which are harmful to guinea pigs.
5. Feed healthy vegetables such as green leaf lettuce, cilantro, parsley, bell peppers, etc. For a list of recommended foods see: <http://www.guinealynx.info/fave.html>
6. Healthy treats such as pieces of apple, carrot, and banana can be given. Not too much though as they are all high in sugar.

Places to find great hay are:  
[www.oxbowanimalhealth.com](http://www.oxbowanimalhealth.com)  
[www.smallpetselect.com](http://www.smallpetselect.com)

Your local tractor supply/farm store/pet store also has guinea pig food for sale. Be sure to ask for the correct products!

## Why SAME sex pairs?

Guinea pigs are herd animals and are very social. They do best in groups of at least 2 to keep them entertained; otherwise they become lonely & depressed.

Spaying & neutering is not typically done in guinea pigs so it is essential to have a properly sexed pair of pigs. For guidelines see: <http://www.guinealynx.info/sexing.html>

**Breeding guinea pigs is very risky.** A number of complications can occur including females needing an emergency C-section!

If you are unsure of a cavy's gender please see a cavy savvy vet!

## Cages & Set Up

The typical guinea pig pet store cage is too small for 1 guinea pig, let alone a pair.

Guinea pigs require a space measuring at least 2ft. by 3ft. and that is for a solo cavy. Cavy's do very well in home-made cages. These are made of shelf grids & coroplast (plastic covered corrugated cardboard). Materials can be found online and in hardware stores such as Home Depot. Already made cages can also be purchased in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. See: <https://www.guineapigcages.com/>

Various litters can be used for cage bedding. A proper variety of litters to use are:

- Paper based litter: Care Fresh (w/o baking soda), Yesterday's News, Store brand equivalency.
- Equine pine pellets or wood stove pellets w/o any chemicals.
- Fleece liners.

**\*never use clumping cat litter if ingested it can cause a blockage which is deadly!**

**\*never use cedar shavings as they cause respiratory illness in guinea pigs!**

**Polyester Fleece:** Many cavy owners use fleece to make pads for cage liners, piggy beds, and cuddle cups! These can be purchased already made or you can make your own. There are many YouTube video tutorials to help you make your own or they can be bought at [www.guineapigcages.com](http://www.guineapigcages.com).