

Guinea Pig Care: The Complete Recovery Standard

1. The Enclosure: Space & Floor Time

Guinea pigs need significant floor space. A minimum of 8 square feet (e.g., 2'x4' cage) is required for two. Avoid commercial "starter cages" which are far too small. Use solid flooring with soft fleece liners or dust-free paper bedding; never use wire-bottomed cages. Provide multiple secure hides to allow them to feel safe as prey animals.

2. Nutrition: Vitamin C & Unlimited Hay

Unlimited Timothy hay is mandatory for digestion and dental wear. **Guinea pigs cannot synthesize their own Vitamin C**; they require daily fresh vegetables (like bell peppers) and high-quality, fortified pellets to prevent scurvy. Always provide fresh, clean water.

3. Social Dynamics: The Pack Bond

Guinea pigs are deeply social animals that can suffer severe health consequences from loneliness. They **must** be kept in pairs or groups. Listen for "wheeking" (greeting/asking for food) and "purring" (contentment/annoyance).

***THE REALITY CHECK:** Guinea pigs are a 5–8 year commitment. They are high-maintenance, social creatures that require daily cleaning, fresh vegetable preparation, and an exotic-specialist veterinarian. If you are not prepared for the time and cost of their specific care, please do not adopt.*

4. Health: Recovery Red Flags

- **Scurvy:** Symptoms include lethargy, joint swelling, and rough fur. Preventable with proper diet.
- **Respiratory Infections:** Wheezing or clicking sounds are an immediate vet visit.
- **GI Stasis/Bloat:** A life-threatening emergency if they stop eating or seem lethargic.

5. Enrichment & Sustainability

Use clean fleece scraps or old soft towels as washable, eco-friendly cage liners. Use large cardboard boxes for "pop-up" tunnels and shelters that can be recycled once chewed.

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For more guides and resource kits, visit: recoverypets.net