

All Creatures Care Cottage

1912 Harbor Boulevard, Costa Mesa, CA 92627

(949) 642-7151

Care of Guinea Pigs

Guinea Pigs are friendly rodents domesticated by the Indians of Peru in the Andes Mountains. They are extremely popular pets because of their docile temperament, ease of handling, and cleanliness. They are acrobatic animals, preferring to run on the ground for exercise rather than climb in fancy cages. They are available in a variety of coat colors and styles. Guinea Pigs have an endearing squeak/squeal when they see you approach their cage with a special treat!

Guinea Pigs enjoy handling if trained early. They are large rodents that need to feel secure when picked up. Because of their larger size they need plenty of cage room, at least 100 square inches per pig. Guinea Pigs do best in flat bottom cages with a thick layer of bedding (pine shavings or ground corncobs). They frequently catch their ankles in wire bottom cages and break their legs so this form of a cage is not recommended. Guinea Pigs like a place to hide so please give them a cardboard box to crawl under. Cleanliness is important to these rodents and their cage must be cleaned at least once a week.

Guinea Pigs stay healthiest if their diet consists of fresh hay (alfalfa or grass hay), very few Guinea Pig pellets, lots of fresh vitamin C daily and fresh vegetables daily. Hay is extremely important to the health of their digestive tract and helps prevent obesity problems. Vitamin C is an ABSOLUTE necessity for Guinea Pigs. Their pellets do NOT contain adequate amounts so this must be supplemented DAILY. A list of excellent vitamin C sources is found on the backside of this page. Do not put vitamin C into their water as this actually can cause problems. Guinea Pigs need to have their water in a bottle with a sipper tube since they only soil water that is in open crocks.

Guinea Pigs tend to be very healthy pets. Their most common problems are related to lack of vitamin C (Scurvy) and inadequate roughage (hay) in the diet. Guinea Pigs occasionally develop a skin parasite that causes hair loss, scabs, and severe itching. This is treated with an injectable medication. Guinea Pigs are very susceptible to heat stroke and need adequate shelter and ventilation during California's hot summers. Guinea Pigs are also very easily poisoned by certain antibiotics and medications. You should consult your veterinarian before administering any drug to your pets.

Female Guinea Pigs are susceptible to birthing difficulties if their initial pregnancy occurs after they are five months old. If you are contemplating babies, your female must be very young. Consult your veterinarian if in doubt of your pig's age and breeding safety. Guinea Pigs are social animals and seem to enjoy cage mates. Spaying females and neutering of male is an excellent idea to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Guinea Pigs are EXCELLENT pets! They are large enough and docile enough to be handled by small children without danger. They're fun personalities make great pets for kids of all ages! Our staff and doctors can help you care for your "Piggy" and maintain it in optimum health.

Vitamin C Content of Selected Foods

The following chart shows the vitamin C content in milligrams (mg) in one-cup portions of selected food:

	<u>Vitamin C (mg)</u>
Turnip Greens	260 mg
Mustard Greens	252 mg
Dandelion Greens	200 mg
Kale	192 mg
Brussels Sprouts	173 mg
Parsley	140 mg
Collard Greens	140 mg
Guavas	125 mg
Broccoli Leaf*	120 mg
Beet Greens	100 mg
Cauliflower	100 mg
Kohlrabi	100 mg
Strawberries	100 mg
Honeydew Melon	90 mg
Broccoli Florets*	87 mg
Spinach	60 mg
Raspberries	60 mg
Rutabagas	52 mg
Orange	50 mg
Cabbage (all leaves and Chinese Cabbage too)	50 mg

*Broccoli Stem has 0 mg of vitamin C

Guinea Pigs need a daily supplement of vitamin C. Processed feed pellets are NOT a reliable source so you must provide fresh vegetables/fruits daily.

Adult Guinea Pig	20 mg/day
Pregnant Guinea Pig	100 mg/day