

Your New Chinchilla

– a guide to its care.

Congratulations on the new addition to your family. This is an exciting time for everyone and we hope that you will have many happy years together. This handout covers some of the basic facts about keeping a chinchilla. Please read it carefully; if you have any further questions ask a member of staff.

Suggested Feeding Guidelines

Chinchillas are designed to eat a diet high in fibre and calcium therefore we recommend feeding a large amount of hay each day. We also recommend feeding 30 grams of chinchilla pellets to complete a balanced diet. Additionally, fresh food like carrot and celery tops are acceptable but should only be given in small quantities.

Housing

Chinchillas are very active and like climbing, jumping and gnawing. They should be housed in same sex pairs. A good cage environment is essential and you should be providing a living space of at least 100cm wide x 50cm deep x 50cm high per chinchilla. If you can provide a larger space then do so. The more space for exercise the happier your chinchilla will be.

It is important to enrich your chinchilla's cage with fruit tree branches and shelves to sit on. It is also advisable to provide a hide for sleeping in. Remember your chinchilla will chew virtually everything so be prepared to replace worn and whittled branches. A food bowl, hay rack/net and a water bottle should be fitted to the cage.

Cage location is important as chinchillas do not like extremes of cold or hot, draughts or noisy parts of the house. A quiet, non draughty room that maintains a temperature of between 10-20°C will be ideal. Do not let your chinchilla get too hot in summer as they can develop life threatening heat stress.

Handling

If a chinchilla feels threatened in its cage, it will retreat into a corner face you and possibly vocalise angrily. To avoid this, handle your chinchilla (with clean, dry hands) each day so it gets used to you.

When handling, use both hands and support the chest and hindlegs to avoid wriggling. Be careful not to stress your pet or handle inappropriately as

chinchillas can shed their fur in alarming bundles if handled too vigorously.

Dust Baths

Chinchillas require a dust bath in order to keep their coats clean and healthy each day. A sepiolite dust (chinchilla dust) should be used. Usually allowing your chinchilla to bath for 20 -60 minutes each day is sufficient.

Dental Care

A healthy set of teeth is essential for chinchillas. Dental problems are extremely common and unfortunately serious. To reduce this risk follow the diet advice above. If your chinchilla ever develops watery eyes or a wet chin it should go to the vet immediately.

Emergency Service

Parkvets has a vet on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. In the event of an emergency, day or night, you should always telephone your usual Parkvets clinic and you will be given the appropriate information on what to do. Alternatively, call the emergency number 020 8300 8111

And Finally

We hope that you will have lots of fun and pleasure from your chinchillas over the coming years. We trust they will enjoy good health and to help achieve this we recommend a health review with one of our vets each year.

Should you need further advice about the health or welfare of your chinchilla then please contact us at the practice.

Special Offer for Ruxley Manor Garden Centre Customers

For your peace of mind Parkvets have teamed up with Ruxley Manor Garden Centre to offer you a 10% discount on your chinchilla's first health check up. Visit our website at www.parkvets.com to find a Parkvets clinic near you.

You should obtain a voucher from Ruxley Manor Garden Centre and present it plus your receipt to Parkvets to claim your discount.



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Parkvets

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