

Your New Guinea Pig

– 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 guinea pig. Please read it carefully; if you have any further questions ask a member of staff.

Suggested Feeding Guidelines

Guinea pigs can eat a wide variety of foods. We recommend giving as much hay or grass as possible. This should be supplemented with fresh food and a pellet mix (we recommend Burgess Supa-Guinea as it is rich in vitamin C which is essential) to give the ideal balance.

Guinea pigs will eat almost any leafy greens or vegetable. Tomatoes and potatoes should be avoided. Lettuce and apples should only be given in moderation to avoid digestive upsets.

Housing & Handling

Guinea pigs can be kept indoors or outdoors. During winter a guinea pig kept outdoors will need lots of extra hay and a covering for the hutch at night to protect from cold and frost. Remember to check the water bottle twice a day to ensure it is not frozen. In summer the hutch should be kept in the shade to prevent heat stress.

Guinea pigs are very social animals and like company. It is best to keep two females together or if you have two males have them castrated at six months old to avoid fighting. Guinea pigs should not be kept with rabbits under any circumstances. Handle your guinea pig every day so it gets used to human contact. A well cared for guinea pig should live for four to six years.

Dental care and Nail Clipping

Guinea pigs' teeth grow continually throughout their lifetime. In the wild they eat grass and gnaw twigs but in captivity dental problems frequently occur. To help with this ensure that your guinea pig has plenty of fresh grass and hay. Carrot tops and chew sticks help as well.

If you find your guinea pig has difficulty eating, has a wet chin or is losing weight he or she should be checked by a vet immediately. Dental disease in guinea pigs is an extremely difficult condition to manage so getting the diet right in the first place is absolutely vital.

Don't forget that your guinea pig's nails will grow all year round and will need clipping occasionally. We recommend having a nail clip with our practice nurse every three months.

Skin Mites

One of the more common problems to affect a guinea pig is skin mites. An affected animal scratches at its skin, develops dandruff and then breaks out in sores along its spine.

This is an intensely irritating and distressing condition that requires urgent treatment to resolve. If you see any signs of this disease get your pet to the vet ASAP.

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 guinea pigs 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 guinea pig 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 guinea pig'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.



RUXLEY MANOR
GARDEN CENTRE

Parkvets

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Veterinary Hospital (020) 8300 8111

Belvedere (020) 8311 5250

Bexley (01322) 553456

Eltham (020) 8859 7914

Longfield (01474) 703377

Mottingham (020) 8857 2100

Swanley (01322) 665916

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