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## Caring For Your Guinea Pig

### ***Biology;***

Guinea Pigs normally live for 5-6 years. Males can be as big as 1.2kg, with females usually smaller. They can reach puberty in as little as 2 months so it important to keep the sexes apart unless you want more babies.

### ***Nutrition;***

Guinea Pigs need access to hay all of the time. 75% of their diet should be good quality grass hay as they are grazing animals like horses. Grass hay (like timothy) keeps their gut moving. Lucerne hay should be avoided as it is not a grass. Grinding fibrous hay all day keeps their constantly growing teeth worn down to avoid expensive dental problems and prevent boredom.



Guinea Pigs are not designed to eat grains, nuts, seeds and corn. Pigs cannot digest the starch and can cause obesity. Mixes are not recommended as they let animals selective feed (that is pick out the bits they like and leave the healthy stuff behind). Pigs do need Vitamin C daily otherwise they will get sick.

The best diet has unlimited hay and measured daily amounts of pellets and vegetables. Some suggestions include: Cos lettuce, Butter crunch, Asian greens, red leaf lettuce, coriander, parsley, mint, basil, capsicum, carrot tops, dandelion greens, kale, Kiwi fruit, broccoli, tomatoes and oranges. Common diseases like obesity, vitamin C deficiency, bladder stones can be prevented with a good quality diet.

### ***Housing;***

Guinea Pigs are social animals and prefer being kept with a friend of the same sex or desexed friend. They must be protected from the heat of the sun in summer. On hot days a frozen water bottle can be put in their enclosure for them to lie on. Housing should keep the pigs safe from predators like dogs and snakes.