

A Quick Guide to Cavy (Guinea Pig) Care

Cavies also called Guinea Pigs are ideal pets for adults and children. They can be housed inside the home or outside and when kept correctly make clean and quite pets. Compared with dogs and cats they require less space and are much cheaper to feed.

However this does not mean they are a disposable pet. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$50 for a shorthair cavy. They may cost more if they are of show quality or are harder to come by breeds. They require a commitment of anything up to about eight years, though their average life span is normally between three to six years.

Unless you intend to breed to not keep males and females together. Females can become pregnant from as young as a month old and makes can impregnate their mother and sisters at about the same age. However cavies are herd animals so it is best to keep more than one of them. Males can be happily kept together if they have been raised together or if one is an older male and a baby male. Healthy cavies have bright eyes and their coat should look glossy. They should not be hunched up or quiet in the corner of their cage. Cavies that are thin, hop as they walk or have a dry scurfy coat may be sick.

HOUSING

Try to buy your cage BEFORE you buy your new cavy. There are many types of commercial indoor and outdoor cages on the market. If your cavies will be kept outside, please ensure the cage is dog, cat, rat and snake proof.

FEEDING

Cavies are total vegetarians. However this does not mean they can eat all vegetable. Members of the onion family and potatoes are two things you should never feed your cavy. Most people feed their cavies fresh fruit and vegetable, grass, hay and guinea pig mix, or pellets. Cavies are like us and do not manufacture their own vitamin C so it is important they have plenty in their diet. Some vegetable high in Vitamin C include tomatoes, capsicum, bok choy, parsley and strawberries. Always change their diet gradually to avoid tummy upsets.

WATER

Cavies MUST have fresh water available at all times. The best type of water containers are sipper bottles. If you leave a water bowl in the cage it can tipped over and the animal will suffer.

BEDDING

Cages should be set up using a thick layer of newspaper to line the sleeping section, then fill the newspaper about an inch deep in wood shavings or about two inches of straw.

WASHING

Cavies need periodic bathing to remain clean and parasite free.

CAVIES AND CHILDREN

Always supervise small children when they are handling their pet cavies. Cavies are very small and can easily be hurt by over enthusiastic patting.

© 2012 Cavy Owners & Breeders Society of Queensland

cobsqld.weebly.com