

# A Quick Guide

## TO CAVY CARE



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### INTRODUCTION

*Cavies also called Guinea Pigs are ideal pets for adults and children. They can be housed inside or outside the home and when kept correctly make clean and quiet pets. Compared with dogs and cats, one or two cavies require less space and cheaper to feed. They are not a disposable pet and require the same level of commitment as any other animal. Expect to pay between \$20 and \$100 for a shorthair cavy, more for show quality or certain breeds. Their average life span is normally between three and seven years. The oldest cavy on record was named Snowball and lived to be a remarkable 14 years and 10.5 months.*

*Unless you intend to breed do not keep males and females together. Males and females from as young as a month old can be sexually active though this is rare. By two months both males and females can easily reproduce and they will mate indiscriminately. Cavies are herd animals so it is best to keep more than one of them. Males can be 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 vegetarians. However this does not mean they can eat all vegetables. Avoid members of the onion family, raw potatoes and any plants generally known to be poisonous. Hay and fresh grass should make up the bulk of their diet, with vitamin C fortified pellets and vegetables and occasional fruit. Cavies are like us and do not manufacture their own vitamin C so it is important they have plenty in their diet. Some vegetables high in Vitamin C include capsicum, broccoli, thyme, parsley, green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, bok choy and other Asian vegetables. 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 or fouled and the animal will suffer.

**BEDDING** - Cages should be lined with newspaper or puppy training pads, then layered with extracted wood shavings or paper based kitty litter.

**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. Cavies are also very susceptible to broken bones from falls

