

# Guinea Pigs

## Diet Diet Diet!

Their dietary requirements are like rabbits but not quite the same! Which is one reason it is tricky to house them together.

1. Offer GRASS hay (known as timothy, paddock, meadow or oaten hay)
2. Small amounts only of legume hays (lucerne or clover hay). Legumes contain too much Calcium and protein and are only appropriate for growing guinea-pigs or females who are pregnant or lactating (feeding babies).
3. A SMALL amount of high quality pellets. Look for pelleted food that contains added Vitamin C and buy small quantities of fresh food because the Vitamin C doesn't last.
4. Offer fresh leafy green vegetables daily. Broccoli, cabbage, endives, cabbages, celery, beet & carrot tops, brussel sprouts, spinach, bok choy and other Asian greens, chicory, dark-leafed lettuce and herbs such a dandelion, parsley, coriander, dill, mint etc
5. A SMALL amount of treats! Fruits rich in Vitamin C such as Kiwi, citrus or the occasional blackcurrant
6. Avoid whole cereals, grains, nuts, seeds, maize, peas, bread, biscuits, sugar, breakfast cereals and chocolate! These are found in many commercial Guinea Pig foods.

## Neutering

Males and females can be desexed at 2-3 months of age. This can help with housing groups of animals together, they are social animals and probably prefer to live in groups.

## Housing

Guinea Pigs are rather timid and don't like sudden changes of conditions. Provide tunnels and hidey-holes such as boxes or pipes or deep piles of hay, straw or shredded paper.

Don't house them on wire floors, sawdust or aromatic wood shavings. Change the bedding often to remove any wet or soiled material.

The cage should be well-ventilated.

Provide two water bottles so that if one gets a clogged up nozzle there is still a source of water.

Avoid prolonged periods above 25C.

Much of this information is thanks to the amazing Dr David Vella BVSc BSc BVSc Diplomate ABVP (Exotic Companion Mammals)