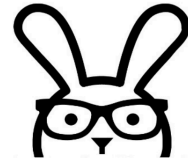


# Chinchilla Care



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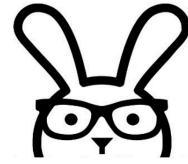
- ***Chinchilla lanigera***
- Adorable rodents that originated from the Andes in South America. Although they don't love cuddles they are such beautiful, inquisitive creatures.
- Lifespan: 10-15 years
- Weight: 400-600g (females larger than males)
- Puberty: males 8-9m; females 4-6m
- Gestation: 105-118 days
- Nocturnal
- Sociable animals

## Enclosure

- Aviary style enclosures can be amazing for chinchillas. This enables lots of height, many levels and ventilation
- Flat surfaces should be available such as platforms for them to rest on. This should have a soft substrate on it such as fleece or foam matting to prevent sore feet.
- As chinchillas are from a cool area they are prone to heat stress. The enclosure should be kept between 10-20°C (over 26°C can cause heat stress)
- It is important to ensure the enclosure is well ventilated. Poor ventilation and high humidity (>50%) can lead to respiratory disorders.
- The best substrate to use is either paper based or hay.
  - Carefresh or paper pellets
  - Wood shavings (including pine) can irritate the respiratory tract
- As chinchillas are prey species they need to be able to feel safe. Multiple hides should be kept throughout the enclosure to make them feel safe
- To keep their fur nice and healthy chinchillas require a dust bath
  - They should have access to the dust bath for at least 15 minutes 5-7 times a week
  - Do not keep the dust bath in the enclosure as this can lead to respiratory and ocular irritation
  - Commercial chinchilla dust bath material should be used; do not use children's play sand
- Enrichment for chinchillas comes through food
  - They enjoy chewing things such as branches. Safe branches include apple, willow and hibiscus. These can create entertainment but also help wear down their incisors.
  - Creating foraging opportunities with their food every day rather than feeding in a bowl can also provide a lot of entertainment
  - Do not give them salt licks or larva chews as these can be detrimental to their health

## Diet

- Domesticated chinchillas need to be fed similar to their wild counterparts. Due to the nature of where they are from they are not adapted to eating fresh food.
- Most of their diet should be hay
  - Timothy or meadow hay should be available at all times
  - The hay should be topped up daily as they will pick through the best bits
  - Hay is so important for their gut health and to enable them to wear down their back teeth.
  - Lucerne hay can be provided to chinchilla less than 4 months old, pregnant or lactating
- A tablespoon of healthy pellets can be fed once a day per chinchilla
  - 16-20% protein, 2-4% fat and 15-20% fibre
    - Selective, Oxbow or Burgess are good brands
  - More pellets be provided to chinchilla less than 4 months old, pregnant or lactating
  - Too much pellets or those of poor quality can lead to dental issues and obesity
- Dried fruits or seeds can be given as treats
- Chinchilla mainly eat overnight so you may not see your chinchilla eating throughout the day
  - Check the cage daily for signs of hiding food. When chinchillas are unwell they may hide food around the cage rather than consuming it which may mislead you.
- Water bowl preferred to bottle
  - Fresh water should be provided daily
  - A glass sipper bottle can be provided as a backup but a bowl should be provided at all times.



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