



Caring for your **D E G U**

Total degu wellbeing

From daily enrichment and balanced nutrition to physical exercise and loads of love, we focus on every aspect of small pet care to help you create a full, healthy and joyful life for the degu you love. In this care guide, we'll cover the basics of what you need to keep your degu happy and healthy.



Hay

Degus are herbivores and need a large amount of roughage, which should be fed in the form of grass hay. Grass hay should make up at least 70% of your degu's daily food intake and be available at all times.

- Hay provides long strand fiber that supports digestive health in herbivores.
- Degus' teeth never stop growing. Hay provides essential wear for dental health.
- Eating multiple varieties of hay daily provides enrichment and prevents picky eating.



Alfalfa is more nutritionally dense than grass hay and can be beneficial for young, pregnant, nursing, ill, or senior pets. For healthy adults, offer alfalfa only as an occasional treat.

FIND OUT WHAT MAKES OXBOW HAY SPECIAL:



Treats

Treats are great for building the bond between you and your pet but should only be offered in moderation. Our Simple Rewards baked treats are both nutritious and tasty, however, offer them only on occasion—not on a daily basis.



Fortified food

Providing a daily recommended amount of a high-fiber fortified food provides your degu with essential vitamins and minerals not provided by hay. As degus are closely related to the chinchilla and guinea pig, we suggest a 50:50 mix of a chinchilla diet and guinea pig diet.



OFFER a 50:50 mix of a chinchilla and guinea pig diet. This can easily be done by mixing two of the same size bags into a container and incorporating them together. **The same fortified food line should be chosen for both species** (for example, Essentials Chinchilla and Essentials Adult Guinea Pig should be used together).

AVOID Mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, fruit, and cereal, and any refined sugars.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SELECTIVE FEEDING IN SMALL ANIMALS:



Greens

Fresh greens are an important part of your degu's daily diet and should be offered a couple times weekly. Greens help keep your pet hydrated and are a healthy source of vitamins and minerals as well as enrichment.

OFFER Romaine, bib, dandelion greens, red or green leaf lettuce, beetroot, dried herbs, and radishes.

AVOID Iceberg Lettuce, leeks, chives, and onions, sweet potato skins, and fruits.

Dust baths

Similar to chinchillas, degus will instinctively "bathe" themselves in dust to maintain a lush, healthy coat of fur. Oxbow's Poof! Chinchilla Dust Bath is the ideal material for keeping your degu's fur healthy and soft and can be offered to them twice a week for 20-30 minutes.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DUST BATHS:



Housing your degu

All degus need a safe space to spend time and avoid stress.

- Choose a spacious, well-constructed, multi-level habitat with a sturdy floor and full shelves to mimic a burrow. Set it up near household activities but away from windows and heating/cooling ducts. Degus require ambient temperatures between 65-75°F, as they can easily overheat.
- Outfit your degu's habitat with essentials such as multiple hides, bedding, a variety of natural chews, grass hay, a food bowl (or two), and two sources of fresh clean water.
- No habitat is large enough to meet your pet's exercise and enrichment needs. Create a pet-safe play area outside their habitat for supervised play and interaction. Watch for dangers like electric cords.
- Degus are very social animals should be housed in pairs or small groups of the same sex.
- Dust baths should be offered regularly, but should not be a permanent fixture in your degu's habitat.
- Degus love to dig! Provide a dig box or plenty of tunnels and hides.

Your degu's health

You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least annually for checkups. Degus can be prone to diabetes—keep unnecessary sugake intake (especially refined sugars) to a minimum.

- Make a list of any questions or concerns you may have before the visit and bring examples of your pet's nutrition, habitat, and husbandry-related items.
- Ask your veterinarian when to spayed or neuter your degu; this increases chances of a longer, healthier life for your pet.
- Many health problems are preventable with proper diet and care.

LEARN MORE ABOUT COMMON HEALTH ISSUES:



REASONS TO CONTACT YOUR VET:

- Loose, soft, or lack of stool
- Small, dry, or infrequent stools
- Blood in the urine
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Overgrown front teeth
- Sores on the feet
- Observed difficulty with chewing
- Bald patches in the fur
- Abnormal eating or drinking
- Hunching in a corner or lack of activity (lethargy)

FIND A QUALIFIED EXOTICS VETERINARIAN NEAR YOU:



Enriching your pets' world

All degus are wired to engage in a set of core instinctual behaviors each day. These behaviors include chewing, playing, hiding, and exploring. Intentionally encouraging these behaviors in healthy ways is called enrichment.

- Support all four behaviors in a variety of ways each day to support your chinchilla's mental and physical health.
- Providing daily enrichment is a fun, interactive way to build your bond with your chinchilla.
- Offer a variety of natural chews, engagement accessories, places for rest and relaxation, and exercise items daily.
- Oxbow's Enriched Life accessories are designed to help make enrichment fun, easy, and safe! Just make sure that the enrichment you provide does not contain fruit.



Supplies for your degu

- A 50:50 mix of Oxbow's Chinchilla and Adult Guinea Pig fortified foods.
- Two or more varieties of Oxbow's hays
- Water bottle, no-tip water dish, and no-tip food bowl
- Multiple Enriched Life natural chews and accessories
- Large play yard for safe exercise outside the habitat
- Large multi-level habitat with solid, non-slip flooring
- Multiple hiding spaces and tunnels
- A solid-bottom exercise wheel at least 12 inches in diameter
- Litter box with Oxbow's Eco-straw litter
- Bedding material, such as Oxbow's Pure Comfort. Avoid aromatic cedar and pine shavings that may contain resin and could irritate your pet's lungs and skin.
- Natural Science supplements as needed.
- Oxbow treats to feed only on occasion.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT DEGU CARE AND BEHAVIOR, VISIT WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM

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