



# Caring for your GUINEA PIG

## Total guinea pig wellbeing

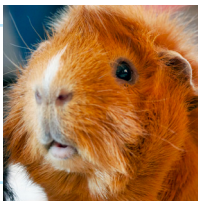
From daily enrichment and balanced nutrition to physical exercise and loads of love, we focus on every aspect of small pet care to help you create a full, healthy and joyful life for the guinea pig you love. In this care guide, we'll cover the basics of what you need to keep your guinea pig happy and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



## Hay

Fresh, high quality grass hay should make up at least 70% of your guinea pig's diet and should always be available. Health benefits of hay include:

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



**Did you know** that your guinea pig's teeth never stop growing? Hay stimulates chewing and dental wear, helping decrease the risk of dental disease.

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:**



## Fortified food

Providing a daily recommended amount of a high-fiber, age-appropriate fortified food with stabilized vitamin C provides your guinea pig with essential vitamins and minerals not provided by hay.



**OFFER** the right food for your guinea pig's stage of life. Oxbow's Young, Adult, and Senior foods are formulated to meet your pet's specific nutritional needs as they progress along life's journey.

**AVOID** mixes with nuts, corn, seeds, or fruit. Guinea pigs are wired to selectively feed on these tempting morsels over the healthy pellets, leading to nutritional deficiencies.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT SELECTIVE FEEDING IN SMALL ANIMALS:**



## Greens

Fresh greens are an important part of your guinea pig's daily diet. Greens help keep your pet hydrated and are a healthy source of vitamins and minerals as well as enrichment.

**OFFER** Romaine, bib, and red or green leaf lettuce.

**AVOID** Iceberg lettuce, leeks, chives, and onions.

**CHECK OUT OUR LIST OF SPECIES-SAFE GREENS AND VEGGIES:**



## Treats

Treats (including fruits) are great for building the bond between you and your pet but should only be offered in moderation. All Oxbow treats are designed to be as wholesome as they are delicious.



*With proper nutrition and care, guinea pigs may live five or more years.*



## Housing your guinea pig

As prey animals by nature, all guinea pigs need a safe place to spend time and avoid stress. Here are some tips to help create the ideal living space for your guinea pig:

- Choose a spacious, well-constructed habitat with a solid floor and set it up near household activities but away from windows and heating and cooling ducts.
- Outfit your guinea pig's habitat with essentials such as multiple hideouts, a litterbox with litter and bedding, a variety of natural chews, grass hay, a food bowl, and two sources of fresh, clean water.
- Add an attachable play yard to create more space for your guinea pig to play and explore.
- No habitat is large enough to meet your pet's exercise and enrichment needs. Provide as much supervised time outside of the habitat as possible each day.

## Your guinea pig's health

You should visit a qualified exotics veterinarian at least once a year for checkups on your pet's diet, behavior, and health.

- Be prepared for your pet's visits by making a list of any questions or concerns you may have ahead of time and bringing examples of your pet's nutrition, habitat, and husbandry-related items.
- Ask your veterinarian to recommend an appropriate age to have your guinea pig spayed or neutered; this will increase the chances of a longer, healthier life for your pet.
- Many guinea pig health problems are preventable with proper diet and care.

**FIND A QUALIFIED EXOTICS VETERINARIAN NEAR YOU:**



### 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 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)

## Enriching your pet's world

All guinea pigs 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 chewing, hiding, playing, and exploring each day to support your guinea pig's mental and physical health.
- Providing daily enrichment is a fun, interactive way to build your bond with your guinea pig.
- Offer a variety of natural chews, places for rest and relaxation, and engagement and exercise accessories.
- Oxbow's Enriched Life accessories are designed to help make enrichment fun, easy, and safe!

**GET MORE ENRICHMENT INSPIRATION FOR YOUR PET:**



## Supplies for your guinea pig

- Fortified age-specific food:** one of Oxbow's three premium formulas for guinea pigs under 6 months of age, one of Oxbow's five premium formulas for adults, or Oxbow's Essentials Senior Guinea Pig Food.
- Two or more varieties of Oxbow's hays**
- Oxbow treats** for healthy bonding and enrichment
- 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 habitat** with solid, non-slip flooring
- Multiple **hiding spaces**
- 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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT GUINEA PIG CARE AND BEHAVIOR, VISIT [WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM](http://WWW.OXBOWANIMALHEALTH.COM)

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