

Guinea Pigs

WATER

Fresh water should always be available. Some guinea pigs like water bowls and some like water bottles. Water should be changed daily. Disinfect the bowl or bottle with a solution of 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 cup of water at least once a week and rinse thoroughly with fresh water before refilling it for your guinea pig. Some guinea pigs with special needs may be given water flavored with fruit juice so that they drink more, but this should only be done with a veterinarian's approval.

CAGING

An adult pair of guinea pigs needs a cage at least 4 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 2 feet tall. A solid floor is recommended since wire floors can create Painful medical conditions with the feet. Provide at least two plastic guinea pig hutches or cardboard boxes big enough to hide in (but not so cramped a guinea pig can't turn around). It is a good idea to have at least two hide boxes per guinea pig. The cage should be well-ventilated. Recycled paper products, such as Yesterday's News™ or Carefresh™, work well as substrates, as do paper towels and blank newsprint (available from specialty paper shops or online paper supply companies). Many guinea pigs quickly learn to use litter boxes, but you may need to place a couple of old fecal pellets in with the litter to get them started. Paper pulp products, such as Yesterday's News™ or Carefresh™, or compressed straw pellets, such as Eco-Straw Litter, should be used in the litter box. Clean the litterbox daily, more often if needed, so that your guinea pig does not develop dirty fur on its hind feet and tail from going into a soiled litterbox. If the litter box isn't cleaned daily, a guinea pig may sit in the soiled litter and may not urinate as often which may lead to bladder infections and stones.

TEMPERATURE

Guinea pigs can become overheated or cold easily. Do not expose to temperatures above 85°F for prolonged periods. Guinea pigs may have supervised access to a yard even during our hottest months as long as there are plenty of cool shady retreats.

HANDLING

Always scoop up a guinea pig to fully support all four feet and its belly. Children under the age of ten should always have older, experienced guinea pig handlers help them hold their pet. Guinea pigs learn routines very easily and look forward to their play time outside of their cages. Be careful when they are on furniture as startled guinea pigs can leap off laps and injure themselves if they fall too far.