

CHINCHILLA CARE

Chinchillas are nocturnal rodents originating from South America, where they are commonly found in the mountains of the Andes. There, they were originally bred for their fur, but nowadays in the UK are kept as pets. They can be friendly docile pets and can live between 10-15 years if looked after correctly. Their teeth grow continuously throughout their life, so they must wear them down by eating hay and grass.

HOUSING

- Chinchillas are very active and destructive animals so should be housed in multi-level wire cages at least 2 x 2 x 1m, to allow natural jumping and climbing behaviour.
- Within the cage, nest boxes, branches and shelves should be provided.
- A dust bath should be offered daily to keep the fur in good condition.
- Temperature – chinchillas will get heat stress and ideally should be kept in a low humidity environment between 10-20°C (50-68F).
- Protection from predators is essential.
- The enclosure should be cleaned out at least once a week to help prevent disease.

COMPANIONS

- Chinchillas are highly social, and are best kept in pairs, single sex groups, or one male with several females.
- Male chinchillas may be castrated if opposite sexes are kept together.

WHAT TO FEED

- Hay or grass is essential to maintain gastrointestinal and dental health, and should make up most of the diet.
- Fresh vegetables and small amounts of fruit (not fruit high in simple sugar) should be fed daily.
- Commercial diets are also available and can make up a small part of a chinchilla's diet. However, as chinchillas can be highly selective feeders, complete pelleted diets are preferable to muesli mixes as they help to ensure that the animal receives a balanced diet.
- Clean water must be given daily either in a water bottle or bowl.

NEUTERING

- Male chinchillas may be castrated in order to reduce fighting, or prevent reproduction
- Female chinchillas are not routinely spayed unless there is a concern about reproductive disease

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet chinchilla as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage – **you can register for automatic reminders**

INSURANCE

We highly recommend that you take out a pet insurance policy. For a monthly fee your pet can receive the best treatment at an affordable cost. There is normally an excess to pay for each condition then after that costs are covered up to a set limit. Once you have the policy, please provide us with a copy of your insurance details. There are a lot of different companies and policies available and we suggest you contact a number of them for information- we have a leaflet advising what to look out for. Our advice is to choose a policy which provides cover for chronic illness for the life of your pet. If this policy is too much for you then the best cover you can afford will provide piece of mind in an accident or emergency.