



# CHINCHILLA CARE

**Average Adult Size:** 1 pound    **Average Lifespan:** 10-15 years

## **General Information**

Chinchillas are beautiful and entertaining little animals. While often skittish at first, chinchillas can quickly warm up to their owners and enjoy human interaction. Let your chinchilla out in a secure room and let it come to you on its own terms. Small treats can be very helpful in persuading a new chinchilla to spend time with you!

## **Enclosure**

Chinchillas are very active and a small space can quickly lead to an overweight and depressed chinchilla. A plastic bottom wire top cage that measures 24"x24" and has multiple levels, is the minimum space for a single adult. However, this cage should mainly be a place to sleep, potty, eat, and drink and the chinchilla should be let out to exercise as much as possible. Avoid wire bottom cages or cover the wire with solid material to protect your pet's feet. Provide various toys in the cage to keep the chinchilla entertained. Chinchilla teeth continually grow throughout their life and wooden chew toys help keep their teeth the appropriate length. Also provide a hide, such as an Igloo, Woodland Hideaway, or Timothy Hay Bungalow to help them feel safe. Line the cage with a soft, paper-based bedding, such as Clean and Cozy, Carefresh, or aspen shavings (do not use cedar/pine due to the oils) and change the bedding as needed to avoid smell.

## **Cage location**

Chinchillas are sensitive to high temperatures and rain so they should not be housed outdoors. Indoor housing also keeps them safe from predators. Maintain a room temperature of about 60-70°F and keep the cage away from drafty areas. Chinchilla fur is very dense and warm, temperatures over 77°F can be quite hot to a chinchilla, keep temperatures cooler or offer a cool place to rest, such as a "Chin-chiller" granite slab. Wherever your chinchilla's cage is placed, use natural light or household lights during the day and keep it dark at night to create a day and night cycle to encourage natural behavior and sleep.

## **Diet**

Being herbivores, the chinchilla's diet consists solely of plant matter. The bulk of your chinchilla's diet should be grass hay such as timothy or orchard grass. Fresh clean hay should always be available to your chinchilla to eat as they please. A quality chinchilla pellet should also be provided as it offers necessary vitamins and minerals. Very small amounts of vegetables can be offered as well but avoid sugary fruits and high water content foods such as iceberg lettuce, as these can cause diarrhea. Research new foods before offering them to your chinchilla to make sure they are safe. Always have clean water available to your chinchilla in a bottle.

## **Grooming**

Chinchillas should not get their fur wet, so traditional baths are not recommended! Chinchillas do love to take what is called a dust bath. A few times a week, give your chinchilla a container that is large enough for it to roll around in, with a good scoop of chinchilla dust. Your chinchilla will naturally want to roll in the dust which will absorb oils from the fur and keep your chinchilla clean, dry, and happy. Don't leave the bath in the chinchilla's enclosure all the time to keep them from using it as a toilet.

## **Keeping more than one**

Keeping multiple chinchillas is recommended but the chinchillas should be the same sex to avoid unplanned breeding and introductions should be slow and careful to avoid fighting. Chinchillas kept individually will need extra attention from their owner to fill their social needs.

**Zamzoo care sheets are intended to cover the basics of animal care, for more information we encourage you to talk to our experts and do further research!**