

Care of Chinchillas

Chinchillas are affectionate, intelligent, playful animals that bond quickly to their owners. They rarely bite and, in general, like to be cuddled and carried. Chinchillas love to jump and will appreciate a chance to run outside of their cage as often as possible. The keys to an ideal relationship with your chinchilla are knowing their correct nutritional needs and properly managing them. With love and veterinary care, expect your chin companion to live 10 or more years!

Daily Feeding

Provide fresh water daily. Give unlimited grass hay for all ages (*timothy, orchard, oat hay, or brome*). Hay provides essential fiber, which helps maintain proper intestinal and dental health. Hay helps to prevent obesity, digestive disorders, and diarrhea. Offer limited amounts of a high-fiber pellet. Oxbow Chinchilla Deluxe provides a balance of fiber, protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, and minerals for all ages. Limit fruits and vegetables to 1 teaspoon daily. When fed in limited quantities, herbs and vegetables can be offered as treats. Avoid gas-forming vegetables such as broccoli or cauliflower.

Housing

Choose a wire cage large enough for climbing play and exploration. Chinchillas need spacious enclosures. Caging should be tall enough to allow them to jump and climb. Enough space should be provided inside the cage to accommodate a dust box and any additional cage furniture. A solid surface exercise wheel is vital to your chinchillas mental and physical health. **Avoid wire wheels**. Use safe bedding. Aromatic cedar and pine shavings are **not recommended** as they contain resins that may be irritating to your pet. Eco-Straw is a preferred litter for chinchillas. Provide a food bowl and a sipper water bottle. A weighted food bowl works best. Never put a cage in direct sunlight or in a draft area. Allow for adequate ventilation, medium temperatures and solid footing on the bottom of the cage.

Pellets

As a general rule, we recommend feeding 2 tablespoons (30 grams) of Chinchilla Deluxe to each adult chinchilla on a daily basis.

Treats

Treats such as fresh vegetables or herbs can be offered but should be fed in limited quantities. A diet containing too many vegetables can result in diarrhea and gastrointestinal upset.

Feed no more than ½ cup of herbs or leafy green vegetables for your chinchilla each day. Some suggestions include:

- Mint
- Basil
- Oregano
- Thyme
- Romaine lettuce
- Butter crunch
- Red leaf lettuce
- Cilantro
- Carrot tops
- Dandelion greens

Feed the same foods consistently in order to prevent digestive upset, and avoid gas-forming vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower.

Water

Water is, of course, a fundamental necessity for the domestic chinchilla. Although city drinking water is adequate for chinchillas, excessive chlorine can be very dangerous. If tap water has a strong disinfectant smell, it should be aired in a wide receptacle for 24 hours, or filtered water should be offered. High quality bottled water is preferable to chlorinated drinking water.

It is obvious that nutrition plays a key role in keeping your pet chinchilla healthy. Fiber is of the utmost importance in preventing gastrointestinal upset and dental problems, two of the most common health issues plaguing the pet chinchilla. Offering your chinchilla a continuous supply of Oxbow Pet Products' timothy hay, mixed with alfalfa hay if desired, is one of the best ways to ensure adequate fiber intake. Be consistent with the amount of Chinchilla Deluxe fed and the type and quantity of treats offered. Your chinchilla's digestive tract thrives on consistency, and your reward will be a pet that is active, bright, alert and healthy.

A Yearly Health Examination including inspection of the oral cavity is highly recommended for all chinchillas !!!!