



# POCKET PET CARE



## *Guinea Pig Housing & Bedding*

### **Guinea Pig Housing**

Guinea pigs need a secure cage safe from predators, which is positioned in a sheltered, draught free area. Providing your guinea pig with a large and spacious environment promotes mental stimulation, increased exercise, ability to express natural behaviour and it is easier to clean.



The area that you provide must be as spacious as possible. A large cage is considered the healthiest way to house your guinea pig. One guinea pig needs at least 70 square centimetres of cage space. This is the minimum requirement that is needed for them to be healthy and happy. The hutch should have room for food and water bowls, resting space and an enclosed hiding area.

Outdoor housing is not ideal nor in the best interests of your pet. There are numerous risks to housing guinea pigs outdoors such as temperature fluctuations, exposure to insects, predators, drafts, less social interaction, exposure to the elements and illness may not be detected promptly. While Guinea Pigs can withstand cold fairly well as long as

they have suitable shelter, they do not tolerate heat or humidity well. Supervised outside time is okay in a wire hutch or wire pet pens. This helps with their mental stimulation and provides them with exercise and access to grass. If you are going out, it is advised that you return your guinea pigs to their indoor home for safety before you leave the house.

Guinea Pigs are very social and will be happier if housed with another guinea pig, but remember this doubles the amount of space that they will need in their cages. Guinea pigs have sensitive paw pads and need solid flooring. They cannot be housed in a wire-bottomed cage.

When guinea pigs are frightened, they either freeze in place or run away, and they prefer to have a hiding place in their cage. Plastic tubes and wooden or woven hay boxes are available in pet supply stores. A good, free alternative is using a cardboard box with the bottom cut out of it. Many guinea pigs love to chew on cardboard boxes and, while you may need to



replace it regularly, this chewing will help keep their teeth worn down to a good length. Small pieces of untreated wood can also be provided to help satisfy your guinea pig's need to chew and keep their teeth from getting overgrown as well.

Guinea Pigs should not be housed with Rabbits. They have different diet requirements and rabbits can give them serious diseases.

### **Guinea Pig Bedding**

Paper or pine bedding should be several inches thick and should be changed twice weekly. Grass hay is also good for bedding areas and they can chew on it as well, helping with the health of their teeth. Cedar shavings should not be used as bedding, as they contain phenols, which can be harmful to guinea pigs. Remove soiled bedding, droppings and stale food from the cage daily. Clean the cage completely once a week by replacing dirty bedding and scrubbing the bottom of the cage with warm water. Be sure everything's dry before adding fresh bedding.

Make sure that your guinea pig doesn't get overheated or chilled, as they are susceptible to both. If you need to venture out with your guinea pig in cold weather, make sure to cover the carrier with a warm blanket. On hot days, the car should be pre-cooled for them. Remember to never, ever leave your guinea pig unattended in a car for any reason even for just a few minutes, especially if it is a day of extreme temperatures.