

# Your guinea pig's health check

If you have any questions about your guinea pig's health please do phone and ask to speak to one of our nurses.



	Normal	Abnormal	Comments
Mouth and Teeth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Eyes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Ears	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Heart and Lungs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Digestive System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Skin and Coat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Paws and Nails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Bones and Muscles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Urinary System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Reproductive System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Toileting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....
Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....

Diet ..... Ideal Diet .....

Weight ..... Ideal Weight .....



would benefit from -

1. Check-up with the vet every 3 mo. to spot health problems early.

2. ....

3. ....

**NEXT APPOINTMENT -**

## Warning signs to watch out for:-

Poor appetite, loss of weight, soft faeces, hair loss, sore ears, eyes or nose, lack of normal activity.

**GUINEA PIGS WEAKEN RAPIDLY WHEN POORLY.**

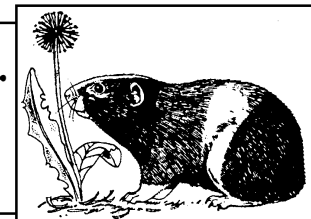
**SEE THE VET AS SOON AS YOU SUSPECT YOUR GUINEA PIG IS NOT WELL.**

May2011 @ VHC

Name

Date

# Top Priorities for your Guinea Pig



## GET THE DIET RIGHT! - (Details inside)

- Your guinea pig IS what he eats!
- The healthiest way to feed your guinea pig is with a complete dry diet such as **Gertie Guinea Pig** and plenty of fresh green vegetables.

## NEUTERING of male guinea pigs - to reduce aggression, allow mixing of sexes and eliminate the risk of testicular tumour. Neutering males will also reduce unwanted odour.

*Anaesthetics for Guinea Pigs - with our Isoflurane vapourisers a general anaesthetic for a guinea pig is now safe and routine.*

## WEIGHT - Check your guinea pig's weight regularly.

Weight loss is usually a sign of ill health. (see the vet).

Weight gain may be an indication of an abdominal disorder or obesity - check that you are not over-feeding your guinea pig.

## NAILS - need checking regularly and clipping if too long. Ask for a demonstration or bring your guinea pig to us if you have any difficulty.

## MITES and LICE - If your guinea pig starts to scratch or twitch he/she may be carrying mites or lice. See the vet as soon as possible so that treatment can be started before fur loss or skin damage results. Mites cause mange. The intense irritation of mange can cause fits.

## HEALTH CHECK EVERY 3 MONTHS -

..with the vet will help catch medical problems before they become serious. Nails and teeth will be checked at the same time.

**Visit our website: [www.vet-healthcentre.co.uk](http://www.vet-healthcentre.co.uk)**

**Daisy Street Veterinary Centre, Daisy St. Blackburn (01254) 53622**

Vets: John Davies MRCVS, David Higginson MRCVS, Sam Purcell MRCVS

Practice Manager: Ruth Swan VN BSc(Hons) PhD

Try these  
Guinea Pig  
web sites!

<http://www.cavyland.org.uk/>

<http://www.caviesgalore.com/>

<http://www.oinkernet.com/oinkrnet.htm>



## LOOKING AFTER YOUR GUINEA PIG'S HOME

- ✓ The hutch should be waterproof, draughtproof, escapeproof, and easy to clean. An outdoor hutch should be off the ground. The roof should be sloping and leakproof with an overhang to provide protection from the elements.
- ✗ Hutches should not be treated with creosote as this is toxic to guinea pigs.
- ✓ Position the hutch in the shade away from direct sun in the summer and sheltered from extremes of weather in the winter. During the coldest months of the year consider putting the hutch into a well ventilated shed or outhouse.
- ✗ Never put the hutch near vehicles or in a garage used by cars.
- ✓ Make your guinea pig's home safe from cats, dogs, foxes and other predators.
- ✓ Use clean woodshavings and hay for bedding. Even better use "Russell Bedding" (dust free, absorbent and has a natural fungicide to keep environment healthy and hygienic).
- ✗ Avoid the use of straw as it is abrasive and can cause eye injuries. Sawdust is not recommended because fine particles can get lodged in the eyes.
- ✓ The hutch should be cleaned out regularly - remove heavily soiled bedding daily and thoroughly clean out the hutch at least once a week. Use a safe disinfectant such as "Russell Home Help".
- ✓ Clean the food bowls and water bottle daily.

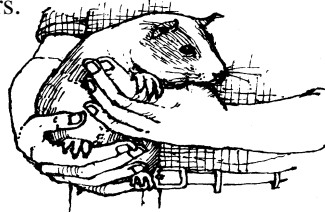
## ENTERTAINMENT for your guinea pig?

**TWO'S COMPANY** - As sociable creatures, it is best to keep guinea pigs in small groups of 2-8. Prevent aggression between them by neutering males and providing plenty of living space with hiding holes (pipes etc.).

Possible combinations include:

- ✓ A male + one or more females: neuter the male to prevent breeding (guinea pigs can be quite prolific!)
  - ✓ A male + a male: litter mates or a young male with an older one will live well together. Neuter to prevent aggression and keep well away from any females.
  - ✓ Group of females: 2 or more females will usually live happily together.
  - ✗ Avoid 2 or more males with any females.
  - ✗ Avoid more than 2 males together or fighting will occur.
- Separate guinea pigs that fight repeatedly.

**ACTIVITY** An outside run or ark is essential for regular exercise and grazing. Inactive guinea pigs develop cage paralysis as they get older. Be sure to provide shelter from the weather and from possible predators.



**HANDLING** - Guinea pigs will soon appreciate regular gentle handling once they have got used to it. Handling also gives you an opportunity to examine your guinea pig for signs of ill health. Lift by placing both hands underneath the belly and hold the guinea pig towards you supporting the rear end firmly.



## GET THE DIET RIGHT!

- ✓ **"Gertie Guinea Pig"** for all guinea pigs young and old supplemented by plenty of fresh green vegetables every day.

### CORRECT FEEDING

#### 1. Feed a quality balanced diet (e.g. Gertie Guinea Pig).

Avoid overfeeding - this ensures that your guinea pig **eats ALL parts of the ration** and doesn't "pick out" an unbalanced diet. This also avoids obesity.

#### 2. Feed plenty of fresh green veg. every day. This supplies the

Vitamin C that is vital for good health in guinea pigs. Spinach, kale and broccoli are particular favourites. Lack of vitamin C leads to scurvy.

#### 3. Feed some hard food to gnaw on such as carrots - remember: a carrot a day keeps the teeth problems at bay! A small piece of branch from a fruit tree can be put in the cage regularly to encourage gnawing.

#### 4. Give some fruit as a treat such as a bit of apple every couple of days. Uneaten fresh food should be removed before it goes off.

#### 5. Fresh water daily (in a water bottle or heavy floor dish).

### FEEDING DISASTERS

- Too little vitamin C leads to serious ill health and scurvy.
- Too much food leads to obesity.
- An unbalanced diet leads to poor bone structure of spine and skull.

### DON'T FEED

- Human food e.g. bread, biscuits, chocolate, scraps.
- Kitchen waste, grass mowings (crushed grass).
- Commercial guinea pig treats (which are often too rich and sweet).