

Fuzzy Wuzzy

| care guide |

CHINCHILLA

Chinchillas are native to the Andes Mountains of South America. They can live 12-15 years. They need to take dust (volcanic ash) baths. Water can damage their fur, and in worse cases, even cause death. Chinchilla means “little Chincha” after the Chincha people of the Andes.

Diet

Chinchillas are herbivores and require the right mix of hay pellets and treats to avoid health problems. Provide your chinchilla unlimited access to Timothy Hay – they should consume hay equal to twice their body size every day. Alfalfa Hay can be offered to younger, geriatric, pregnant, ill or stressed chinchillas with higher nutritional needs. Feed fortified chinchilla pellets daily for a healthy balanced diet along with small quantities of treats of fresh fruits and vegetables like apples, pears, bananas, carrots and raisins. Grains like oat groats, rolled oats and wheat can also be fed in limited amounts. A daily multi-vitamin in their food is also recommended. Fresh water should always be available in a water bottle.

Housing

Chinchillas can be very active. Choose a large cage to provide ample room to climb, jump, play, and explore with multiple levels, tunnels and a lounging area. A hiding space is essential. A layer of bedding material should cover the bottom of the cage. Avoid aromatic pine and cedar shavings with resins that could cause skin or respiratory problems. Place the cage away from drafts or direct sunlight.

Handling & Care

Chinchillas are fairly quiet, gentle, easy-to-care for pets. If handled when young, they remain tame and docile with regular handling. They have a rather delicate rib cage so they must be handled with care to avoid injury. When picking up your chinchilla, slide your hand under the Chinchilla's chest and gently lift while supporting the hind end with the other hand. Cradle the animal next to your chest.

Grooming

Chinchillas need to dust bathe to maintain their luxurious coats. This is best accomplished by removing the animal from the cage and allowing them to dust bathe in a room that is easy to clean. Put the dust bath (volcanic ash) in an open container like a cat's litter pan or an actual chinchilla dust bath house. Fill the container about 1 inch deep with the dust. Place the chinchilla near the pan and watch the fun. (Placing the litter pan in a dry bath tub, or shower stall makes for easier clean up.) Let the animal dust bathe for 15 -20 minutes once or twice a week.

Health

Many chinchilla health problems are a result of poor nutrition, digestive or dental problems or obesity. Contact your veterinarian if you notice the following symptoms:

- Loose or soft stools
- Blood in the urine
- Wet fur under chin
- Sneezing or trouble breathing
- Hunched in corner
- Overgrown front teeth
- Bald patches in the fur
- Sores on the feet
- Abnormal eating or drinking



CHINCHILLA CHECKLIST

- Hay
- Chinchilla Pellets
- Heavy Feed Dish
- Water Bottle
- Cage with Solid Bottom
- Bedding
- Litter Box
- Tunnels
- Hiding Place
- Hammock
- Chinchilla Dust
- Dust bathhouse
- Treats

