



Dear New Adopting Family,

Thank you so much for opening your heart and your home to a wonderful pet from Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC)! We hope that this will be the beginning of a long and happy life together, and we have the following information to help ensure things start off smoothly with your new pet.

It is strongly recommended that you keep your new pet away from other pets in the household for the first two weeks. While we understand that you will be very excited to bring your new pet home and introduce them to the family right away, guinea pigs are a prey species and are not generally companions for other pets though they can cohabitate peacefully with other species during careful supervised introductions. Guinea pigs make excellent companions for each other; however, please make sure before you attempt an introduction that both guinea pigs are either the same sex or are spayed/neutered. If recently altered, be sure to supervise interactions to prevent any injury to the incision site.

Please make an appointment with a pocket pet savvy veterinarian to have your new pet examined after adoption. It is very important to schedule this initial exam even if your pet appears to be healthy so that you can discuss a wellness plan that is specifically designed for your pet.

We microchip all our pets- please review the HomeAgain flyer provided by the adoptions team for information on registering your guinea pigs' microchip.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly. You can reach us via email at adoption@nycacc.org or phone 718-241-7166/212-289-8315. You can also visit our website www.nycacc.org for additional information. We love to hear updates and see photos of your new pet in the home!

Sincerely,

Adoption Team
Animal Care Centers of NYC



Guinea Pig Supply Checklist

- Minimum Cage Size:
 - One guinea pig*: At least 7.5 sq ft (e.g., 30" x 36" or 2.5 ft x 3 ft)
 - Two guinea pigs: At least 10.5 sq ft (e.g., 30" x 50" or 2.5 ft x 4.2ft)
 - Recommended Type: C&C cages (Cubes & Coroplast) or large open-top habitats
 - [Check out our guinea pig housing guide here: **ACC Guinea Pig Housing Guide**](#)
- Avoid: Pet store cages marketed for guinea pigs — most are too small! Wire bottom cages are never recommended.*
- Play pen for daily exercise
- Food bowl- ceramic recommended, avoid plastic and metal bowls
- Stopped water bottle
- Hay rack
- Plastic litter box if desired
- Pet carrier
- Newspaper and blankets or "Care Fresh" bedding. Avoid cedar and pine shavings as they can cause respiratory problems
- Guinea pig toys
- Hidey Hut or cardboard box
- Electrical cord covers for any outlets near cage or play pen

Food Supplies -

- Timothy Hay
- Timothy hay-based pellets
- Fresh vegetables, see attached list
- Apple twigs or untreated wood to chew on

Health Care Supplies –

- Comb
- Nail clippers / styptic powder
- Critical Care

*Guinea pigs are social animals and must be adopted in pairs. However, if you're looking for a new companion for your resident guinea pig and adopt a singleton, the new guinea pig should have their own enclosure prior to introductions. After introductions are successful, the guinea pigs should have the appropriate size enclosure.



Sample Guinea Pig Set-up

*Check out our [ACC Guinea Pig Housing Guide](#) to view more examples of approved set-ups!





Guinea Pig Diet Guide

Hay: Timothy hay is very important in your guinea pig's diet and should be fed in unlimited quantities. Hay provides fiber which keeps guinea pig's intestinal tract healthy and helps to keep teeth from overgrowing. A hay canister is recommended to provide unlimited access without creating a mess. Alfalfa hay has high levels of calcium and can lead to bladder stones so it should be considered a treat instead of a staple in a healthy adult guinea pig's diet.

Fresh Vegetables: Fresh greens are nearly as important as hay for a guinea pig's diet. We'd advise you to begin with one type of fresh green and then adding in others gradually so long as there is no gastrointestinal stress. We recommend consulting with your vet for an exact food and diet plan; however, an adult guinea pig should receive approximately one cup or 240 mL of greens per day. Please make sure to wash all vegetables thoroughly (even those that say organic or pre-washed) to remove any pesticides, fertilizer or harmful bacteria that can lead to illness. Anything you're feeding your pig should be something you could eat yourself! Cleaning your guinea pig's greens also increases water consumption if left wet. Please see our sample food chart for some vegetables safe for guinea pigs.

Pellets: We recommend consulting with your veterinarian on the amount of pellets you should be feeding your guinea pig based on his or her weight. We recommend feeding 1/8 cup of pellets per day to begin. A high-quality adult guinea pig pellet has a timothy hay base and does not contain dried fruit, seeds, nuts, or colored particles. Guinea pigs under 1 year of age should be fed a pellet that is alfalfa hay based. Pellets should also contain Vitamin C because they are not able to produce it naturally. Pellets should be stored in a dark, dry, and cool space in order to preserve the stabilized vitamins.

Water: Unlimited access to clean, fresh water is an important part of a guinea pig's diet. Stoppered water bottles are recommended to keep water clean and free of contaminants. It is very important to wash the bottle at least once weekly and to check for leaking. The water should be refreshed daily.

Guinea Pig Treats: Guinea pigs can have a limited amount of fresh fruit such as apples, apricots, cherries, mangos, peaches, plums, and pears as a treat per day. Be sure to only feed in small amounts because of the high sugar content. Bananas should be fed very sparingly because they can lead to constipation. Do not feed your guinea pig any human treats such as nuts, beans, cereal, chocolate, bread and crackers. Store bought small pet treats such as yogurt drops, corn kernels, and fruit and seed mixes should be avoided.



Guinea Pig Vegetable Chart

Feeding Your Guinea Pigs Feed Each Guinea Pig Approximately 1 Cup of Fresh Vegetables Daily Pick 2-3 Types of Greens • Add 1-2 Other Vegetables	
Step 1: Choose 2-3 Greens	Step 2: Choose 1-2 Other Vegetables
Can Be Fed Daily: ▪ Butterhead Lettuce ▪ Endive ▪ Escarole ▪ Green Leaf Lettuce ▪ Radicchio ▪ Red Leaf Lettuce Can Be Fed 2-4 Times Per Week: ▪ Arugula ▪ Broccoli Leaves ▪ Chicory Greens ▪ Dandelion Greens ▪ Garden Cress ▪ Mustard Greens ▪ Parsley ▪ Romaine Lettuce ▪ Thyme Can Be Fed 1-2 Times Per Week: ▪ Collard Greens ▪ Dill ▪ Kale ▪ Spinach ▪ Turnip Greens ▪ Watercress	Can Be Fed Daily: ▪ Bell Pepper (Green, Yellow) ▪ Tomatoes (Red, Grape, Cherry) ▪ Zucchini (with Skin) Can Be Fed 2-4 Times Per Week: ▪ Baby Carrot (1 per guinea pig as a treat) ▪ Beans (Snap, Green) ▪ Bell Pepper (Red) ▪ Celery (Cut Into Small Pieces and Remove Strings) ▪ Corn Husks and Silk ▪ Cucumber (with Peel) ▪ Peas (in the Pod) ▪ Squash (Summer or Winter) ▪ Turnips Can Be Fed 1-2 Times Per Week: ▪ Asparagus ▪ Basil ▪ Beets ▪ Broccoli ▪ Brussels Sprouts ▪ Cauliflower ▪ Raw Pumpkin (No Seeds)
Fruit Feed Once or Twice Per Week and in Small Amounts as Special Treats	
Apple (with Skin; Core and Seeds Removed), Blackberries, Blueberries, Grapes (Red or Green; Seedless), Kiwi, Mango, Melon, Cantaloupe, Oranges (with Peel), Peach, Pear, Pineapple, Plum, Raspberries, Strawberries, Watermelon (with Rind)	
Feeding Tips	
• About 20 sprigs of cilantro and a 1/8 bell pepper (red, yellow, or green) slice per guinea pig are good daily staples to ensure vitamin C intake. • Guinea pigs are grazing animals. Consider separating daily vegetables into two meals, each at morning and evening when guinea pigs are most active. • If you don't know if a vegetable is safe to feed, don't feed it!	



General Guinea Pig Health

Your guinea pig should see the veterinarian at least once a year for examination and immediately if s/he is sick or injured. Your veterinarian will recommend what specialized care or treatments will be needed for your guinea pig. You should never give your guinea pig any medication unless advised by your veterinarian and they should be kept away from any human medications. If you suspect that your guinea pig may have ingested a poisonous substance or are unsure if a product he or she has eaten is poisonous, please call your veterinarian or the National Animal Poison Control Center immediately at (888) 426-4435 for information and instructions on what to do (note that a consultation fee may apply).

Bumble Foot: Bumble Foot or pododermatitis is a condition where the footpad becomes inflamed and develops painful red sores. This is generally caused by wire bottom or dirty cages, a lack of Vitamin C, obesity, and/or overgrown nails. A monitored high-quality diet and a clean environment is the best way to prevent this in your guinea pig.

Diarrhea: Guinea pigs that are fed water greens such as iceberg lettuce or large amounts of sugary fruits and treats can have diarrhea. Any new greens and pellets should be introduced slowly over the course of the week. All fruits and vegetables should be washed and checked for mold. Contact your vet if you notice any foul smelling soft or watery stool. Guinea Pigs that eat a healthy diet of dark leafy greens, hay and measured pellets will generally not have any digestive issues!

Respiratory Infections: Respiratory infections are common in guinea pigs and can be caused by bacteria, dampness, drafty environments, stress and dirty cages. It's important for guinea pig's environments to be kept clean and in a temperature regulated environment. Respiratory illnesses are easily treated with antibiotics but it's crucial for them to be seen because if left untreated, it can lead to pneumonia. Consult with your vet if you notice a runny nose, cough, or clicking/wheezing when your guinea pig takes a breath.

Vitamin C Deficiency (Scurvy): As mentioned previously, guinea pigs cannot produce Vitamin C naturally and need to have it supplemented in their diet. Without it, guinea pigs can begin to present with symptoms of scurvy. Symptoms of scurvy include lameness or paralysis of the back legs, lethargy, decreased appetite and weight loss, and a rough hair coat. If any of these symptoms are noticed, they should be taken to the vet right away. The best way to incorporate Vitamin C into a guinea pig's diet is through both pellets and fresh fruits and vegetables. Some fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin C include yellow peppers, beet greens, cilantro, parsley, strawberries, and kale. Pet stores often carry Vitamin C drops that can be added to water; however they degrade rapidly after opening and in the sunlight.



Local Guinea Pig Savvy Vets:

Manhattan

The Center for Avian and Exotic Medicine

586 Columbus Ave
New York, NY 10024
(212) 501-8750

The Animal Medical Center

510 East 52nd St
New York, NY 10065
(212) 838-7053 or (212) 329-8622

Brooklyn

Prospect Heights Animal Hospital

277 Flatbush Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 789-3647

Vinegar Hill Veterinary Group

57 Front St Unit 101
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 797-6875

Long Island

Catnip & Carrots

2221 Hillside Ave
New Hyde Park, NY 11040
(516) 887-7080

Island Exotic Vet Care

591 East Jericho Turnpike
Huntington Station, NY 11040
(516) 877-7080

Westchester

Veterinary Center for Birds and Exotics

709 Bedford Rd
Bedford Hills, NY 10507 (914) 864-1414



Guinea Pig Enrichment

Guinea Pigs are very active and require both mental and physical stimulation. Your guinea pig should get time out of his or her cage each day to stretch their legs and explore. A play pen is a good investment in order to keep your guinea pig contained and away from anything that could be dangerous in the home. Be sure to remove or cover any wires near where your guinea pig roams. If you have hardwood floors, lay a blanket or yoga mat down for the guinea pig to walk on so that they don't slip.

Toys are also an important part of your guinea pig's day. A bored pig is an unhappy pig! Here are some toys your guinea pig may enjoy:

- Paper bags and cardboard boxes
- Toilet paper or paper towel tubes stuffed with hay
- Tunnels
- Slim cat feeders full of pellets
- Wooden blocks
- Untreated and unpainted wicker or hay baskets
- Willow balls
- Plastic cat toys (although being cautious since some toys contain bells that could be swallowed)
- Check out our housing guide for more enrichment ideas!

Common Guinea Pig Language

Guinea pigs are vocal and expressive pets. Here are some common sounds and behaviors that you may see.

Wheeking: This means that your guinea pig is excited! It's the most common sound you'll hear your guinea pig make.

Popcorning: This also means your guinea pig is excited and is when they jump around like a popcorn popping!

Purring: Deep purrs accompanied with a relaxed body means that a guinea pig is content and satisfied.

Rumbling: This is a deep vibration that sounds like a motorboat and is accompanied by a guinea pig wiggling their hind end and is used to display dominance and can indicate stress.

Teeth chattering: This is a sign of stress, agitation and anger. It is typically seen between two guinea pigs before a fight.