

Chinchilla Care Guide

Chinchilla care

Owning and caring for Chinchilla is great fun and very rewarding, but it is a big responsibility and a long - term commitment. Did you know Chinchilla can live on average 15 – 20 years?

Getting your Chinchilla's diet and environment correct is the best way of ensuring a long and healthy life. Here are some guidelines for offering your Chinchilla the best care:

- **Chinchillas are sociable animals and need to live in pairs or small groups.** A single neutered male can live alongside one or more females.
- **Chinchillas are nocturnal**, so they are active at night and sleep during the day. As a companion animal, they are more suited to adults and older children.
- **Chinchillas like to sit and play at different heights** in their cage so wooden shelves hooked on to the side of the cage are ideal. Also thick branches of willow or oak make good play seats. A bedroom area for snuggling should be made from a sturdy wooden nesting box, but bedding inside is not necessary.
- **Chinchillas are sensitive to heat, light, damp and draughts.** The cage should be situated in a suitable location to prevent health problem. They are prone to heat stroke due to their extremely thick fur.
- **A daily dust bath** (using chinchilla dust/ sand) is needed to keep their coats clean and free from grease. Chinchillas only groom themselves when feeling completely relaxed, safe and stress free.
- **Chinchillas require a minimum of 1 hour exercise per day outside of their cage.** This should be done under supervision in a safe room (with no wires or other animals).
- **Check your Chinchilla for signs of injury or illness every day.**
 - Check teeth are not becoming overgrown – seek veterinary advice if necessary.
 - Check coat and skin for signs of bald patches, sores or lumps. Seek veterinary advice if found. Their fur is so thick they cannot get fleas.
- **Clean the house and toilet areas regularly.** The base of the cage should be lined with newspaper or substrate to collect droppings and urine.

Diet

Chinchilla's teeth grow continuously throughout their life. The teeth need to be worn down every day by eating grass and hay. Failures to eat the right diet with quickly result in serious dental disease.

The diet should include:

- **Hay:** the best diet consists almost entirely of good quality hay and dried grass forage, available at all times.
- **Fresh water**, available at all times.
- **Complimentary feeds:** this should be in pellet form with balanced nutrients, rather than a muesli mix, to prevent selective feeding.
- **A cuttlefish or twigs from hazel or fruit trees** should be provided to wear down the teeth.
- **Treats:** Chinchillas cannot break down sugars and have sensitive stomachs. Feed maximum of one per day: half a dried apricot, ½ inch of dried fruit, one monkey nut in its shell, a few blades of grass, fresh apple or broccoli (minimal as fruit can cause diarrhoea). Avoid commercial treats which are high in sugars.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN ADOPTING RAYSTEDE CHINCHILLA

Adoption Fees: **£30**

(Average daily cost of care for all small animals at Raystede is in excess of £300)

Rehoming Chinchilla

We aim to find the best forever homes for the Chinchilla's that end up in our care, so we have several **rehoming requirements** to guarantee each Chinchilla finds the right home:

- **Chinchillas are rehomed in pairs or small groups**

Chinchillas are social animals and naturally live in groups. Therefore, we rehome chinchillas in pairs. We only rehome single chinchillas as a companion for an existing chinchilla. Males must be neutered before rehoming.

- **A pair of chinchillas need a cage of at least 90 x 90 x 90cm / 3 x 3 x 3ft**

The cage should have plenty of shelves, branches and boxes inside. The base of chinchilla cages are usually wire mesh with a tray underneath, lined with newspaper or substrate to collect droppings / urine. This prevents chinchillas standing on the wire and getting substrate caught in their thick fur. It also aids cleaning.

Remember, chinchillas require a minimum of 1 hours exercise per day outside of their cage.

We take particular care where there are children under 7 years to ensure we will find the right match.

Raystede Chinchilla are:

- Health checked by a vet
- Follow up advice available
- Neutered (males only)

Applying to adopt Raystede Chinchilla

Having read this Chinchilla Care Guide, if you are still interested in adopting Raystede Chinchilla and feel you can provide the necessary care, please complete an application form.

Before your application is approved, the Small Animals team must approve your Chinchillas accommodation via photos clearly showing their accommodation. Please email photos to smallanimals1@raystede.org.

Thank you for your interest and support. We hope we can help you find some new companions.