

# CHINCHILLA CARE

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Free ranging chinchillas live in caves in the Andes Mountains of South America. They thrive in low temperature and low humidity. The most common species, Chinchilla lanigera is a rodent and is more closely related to Guinea Pigs than rabbits.

The key to establishing an ideal relationship with a pet chinchilla is adhering to its nutritional and management needs.

## DIET AND FEEDING

provide fresh water daily

GIVE UNLIMITED GRASS HAY (timothy, orchard, Brome) to prevent digestive problems, obesity and diarrhea.

Provide alfalfa hay during growth and pregnancy

Offer a limited amount of high fiber pellets daily

Limit fresh foods and do not make sudden food changes

## HOUSING

Chinchillas are very active and are able to jump 3 feet in any direction.

The larger the cage the better, but 2x2x3 feet is an absolute minimum.

Wire mesh is often used with solid flooring and wood perches in multiple tiers. A wooden hide box is provided for sleeping.

## BEHAVIOR

Basically nocturnal, chinchillas can be active during the day but should be allowed to sleep.

They are charming, intelligent pets that need playtime every day.

Always supervise when out of the cage.

Provide a cool (50-68°F) and dry environment.

Temperatures over 70° can be dangerous.

Use dust baths only, never water to balance the naturally oily skin and fur

Although they tend to urinate in the cage or litter box, chinchillas are hard to train with regard to their numerous hard, dry fecal pellets.

When stressed, chinchillas can chew their fur off.

Stress can also lead to diarrhea.

They are one of the most affectionate rodents and prefer to be held.

They rarely bite unless restrained against their will or trapped.