

Chinchilla Diet and Husbandry

Cats and Critters
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Hay	Timothy Hay www.oxbowanimalhealth.com
<p>Timothy Hay should be 75% of an adult chinchilla's diet. Unlimited hay should be available at all times.</p>	
<p>Other hays: Alfalfa hay, Orchard Grass, Oat Hay, Bunny Brome, Botanical Hay</p>	

The quality of hay varies more than you might think. Make sure your hay is **green** and **smells** fresh before buying.

Pellets	Oxbow Chinchilla Deluxe
<p>Oxbow Chinchilla Deluxe is a high quality high fiber pellet that should comprise 20% of the diet at 1/8 cup daily. Other Brands: American Pet Diner Timmy or Alfie Chinchilla Pellets.</p> <p><i>Avoid pellets that are mixed with nuts corn, seeds, and fruit.</i></p>	

Vegetables/Fruits/Treats	
<p>Vegetables: Parsley, carrots, red and green leaf lettuces, dandelion greens, cilantro, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens</p>	<p>No nutritional value: Iceberg lettuce, cucumbers, celery. These can cause diarrhea/soft stools.</p>
<p>Fruits: Apple slices, banana slices, strawberries can be fed in very small amounts.</p> <p>*Sick animals should not be fed fruit or anything high in sugar.</p>	<p>Gas producing: Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli.</p>
<p>Treats: Dried apples, alfalfa, raisins, rosehips, and figs are acceptable treats. Treats should amount to no more than one teaspoon daily. All natural treats should be the only treats offered. Avoid commercially produced treats like yogurt drops and seed sticks.</p>	

Housing and Medical Concerns

www.chincare.com

Caging: The home cage should be a minimum of 9 square feet for one adult, adding 3-4 square feet per additional chinchilla. The cage should be comprised of wire or metal bars with a solid floor. The larger and taller the cage the better. If possible find a cage that is tall with shelves and ladders allowing the chinchilla to climb. **Place the cage in a quiet area where human activity will not disrupt them during the day. Ambient temperature should not reach over 77° F place the cage away from drafts and direct sunlight.**

Cage Accessories:

Water Bottle (Glass is better to avoid chewing)

Crock for Pellets

Wheel: Choose a wheel that is at least 15 inches in diameter, with a solid running surface and an open side with no cross supports. **Wire wheels are dangerous and can seriously injure feet, legs, and**



tails. www.chinworld.com

Dust Baths: Regular dust baths are essential for hygiene. Provide a dust bath at least **twice** weekly.

Nest Box: Comfortable hiding places are important for a Chinchilla's overall wellbeing.

Toys: Non-toxic, untreated branches and twigs from apple trees can be used (placed) in the cage as toys. Other examples include willow balls and rings that are made for rabbits (www.busybunny.com) or a pumice block for chewing.

Bedding: Cover the cage floor with 1 to 2 inches of Care Fresh or a similar paper based bedding. Aspen bedding is also acceptable. A thick towel topped with a fleece blanket is also great alternative. **Cedar and pine contain harmful phenols and oils and should be avoided.**



Medical Concerns	
<p>Common Medical Concerns: Digestive issues, dental issues and obesity are common medical problems of the Chinchilla. If your Chinchilla exhibits the following symptoms, please contact your veterinarian for an appointment right away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in the stool• Blood in the urine• Overgrown front teeth, or drooling• Bald patches in the fur• Hair loss, wet/crusty fur• Sores on the feet• Decrease/Increase eating or drinking	<p>Five Freedoms with which all animals should live their lives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Freedom from hunger and thirst2. Freedom from pain, injury or disease3. Freedom from fear and distress4. Freedom from discomfort5. Freedom to express behaviors that promote well-being
<p>Handling: The correct way to pick up and hold a chinchilla is by placing one hand below the body, with the thumb around a front leg, and a second hand beneath the hind quarters to support the weight. Improper handling can cause clumps of hair to fall out. Never pick up or pull a Chinchilla by the tail which can cause broken vertebrae.</p>	<p>Cleaning: Chinchillas are naturally clean animals that will physically and mentally decline in a dirty cage. A complete change of bedding and through cleaning of entire cage contents should occur at least twice weekly. Proper cage maintenance is essential to prevent infection and disease.</p>
