### Chinchilla Diet and Husbandry

**Hay**

- **Timothy Hay** should be 75% of an adult chinchilla’s diet. Unlimited hay should be available at all times.

- Other hays: **Alfalfa hay, Orchard Grass, Oat Hay, Bunny Brome, Botanical Hay**

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** 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 Alffy Chinchilla Pellets.

*Avoid pellets that are mixed with nuts corn, seeds, and fruit.*

### Vegetables/Fruits/Treats

- **Vegetables:** Parsley, carrots, red and green leaf lettuces, dandelion greens, cilantro, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens

  - **No nutritional value:** Iceberg lettuce, cucumbers, celery. These can cause diarrhea/soft stools.

- **Fruits:** Apple slices, banana slices, strawberries can be fed in very small amounts.

  - **Gas producing:** Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli.

  - *Sick animals should not be fed fruit or anything high in sugar.

- **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.**
# Chinchilla Diet and Husbandry

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<th>Housing and Medical Concerns</th>
<th><a href="http://www.chincare.com">www.chincare.com</a></th>
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<td><strong>Caging:</strong> 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. <strong>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</strong> place the cage away from drafts and direct sunlight.</td>
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**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](http://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](http://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

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Common Medical Concerns:</strong> Digestive issues, dental issues and obesity are common medical problems of the Chinchilla. If your Chinchilla exhibits the following symptoms, <strong>please contact your veterinarian for an appointment right away:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • 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 |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Five Freedoms</strong> with which all animals should live their lives.</th>
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</table>
| 1. Freedom from hunger and thirst  
2. Freedom from pain, injury or disease  
3. Freedom from fear and distress  
4. Freedom from discomfort  
5. Freedom to express behaviors that promote well-being |

### 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.

### 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.