



## Chinchilla Care

### Your New Chin

Your chinchilla has come from an environment that has allowed it to develop bacteria in its “gut” that allows it to digest food. This bacteria is very important, in order to maintain it during the first couple of days please feed the food provided until your chin has allowed itself to de-stress. Then add the new food 50/50 mix to slowly allow him/her to adjust. If you have another chin it is very important to allow a quarantine time. Again this isn't because your new pet is sick but to allow the chin and it's gut bacteria to adjust to his/her new home.

### Meeting Other Chinchillas

If you have a chinchilla please remember that it is possible they may never be friends. If they are of the **same sex** after a quarantine period you will have to allow them to bond if you wish them to play or be housed together.

### First Week or Two

Especially if you picked up a young junior chinchilla – give your chin time to de-stress. I know it's very tempting to want to play and interact with them; however they need time to get used to people, smells (especially of other animals) and their new environment. Put your hands in the cage without grabbing for them. Let them investigate and give them a treat – let them want to climb onto your hand for the treat. ***Give them time.***

### Feeding

Your chinchilla has been fed Manna Pro Sho feed which has the perfect combination of protein, etc. for the chinchilla. However since buying 50lbs of feed isn't easy for the pet owner (feed goes bad if not used within a short time) you will need to find a good brand of chinchilla feed (I do sell feed if needed). The only pet store feed I can recommend is Oxbow. Stay away from feeds with anything other than green pellets. Two (2) tablespoons a day is sufficient for a chinchilla; while most don't over eat its best to give them only what they would consume in two days. Chinchillas should also get good quality Bermuda, timothy or timothy/alfalfa hay mix (higher in protein then they really need) every day. Do not feed straight alfalfa as it is high in protein. I prefer to use hay cubes in the home as it also gives them chewing exercise and makes it much easier to keep their area clean in the home.

Your chinchilla will also need fresh drinking water at all times. Make sure to give them a water bottle (they do not drink from bowls) that is at a height they can reach. Use filtered water (from Walmart, etc) and suggest buying the gallon jugs of water filtered for infants. If you want to switch to home water slowly change like you did the food by adding 50/50 after the “de-stressing” period.



Treats – everyone likes to give treats to our pets and your little chinchilla is used to getting them daily. I give my chinchillas a feed conditioner as a treat and never use raisins due to the sugar content (except when providing calcium to mothers). Four (4) pieces of the treat I've given you is enough for the day. Never give your chinchilla fresh food i.e. vegetables, lettuce, etc. their diet is restricted to drier foods like dried grasses. Organic rose hips can be given; however I'd keep it to 1 a day or less. They provide good chewing exercise also.

One last item is to remember to give them something to chew on. Pumice stones, dried "approved" branches, hay cubes, pieces of kiln dried pine wood, etc. Most often this will include the cute house you bought them that will soon be decorated chinchilla style.

### **Bathing**

It is important to remember that it is not healthy for chinchillas to get wet since they have dense fur that makes it impossible to air-dry. Thus, moisture tends to stay on their skin, which makes them susceptible to fungal problems. In case your pet becomes wet by accident, you may dry it with a hair dryer set in "cool" or by rubbing its fur with a towel.

Due to the moisture and oils (added by our human hands) that accumulate on the chinchillas fur they bathe in "dust". In the wild this occurs naturally in the normal habitat for pets we need to provide them with dust to bathe in. The two (2) main brands of dust (this is volcanic) is Blue Cloud and Blue Sparkle. Only a tablespoon for each chinchilla is needed. The container you provide them is important mostly to you as they enjoy rolling in anything. I use glass "cookie" style containers and metal tins. Both have lids so I can set them aside when the chinchillas are done. Do not leave them in all day. For the pet owner putting a glass container inside of a plastic tub with a hole cut in it and then placing that in your bathroom is often a good option. Chinchilla bathing dust is the only messy part of owning a chinchilla so coming up with a good process for letting them have their fun is important.

### **Cages**

Cages need to have bars that are spaced no more than 1" apart for teen/adult chins and ½" for babies (your new chinchilla will be big enough for 1" bars). Chinchillas are agile creatures, and they enjoy jumping around more than anything. So, make sure you give your pet a spacious cage so it can jump freely. Parrot cages are often suitable (however must have the height adjusted for young chins till about 9mths due to falls). You can add a box inside the cage, which they can use for sleeping/hiding and platforms made of lava stone and kiln dried pine for jumping. Until your chinchilla is 6 months old it is safer to keep the cage to about 2ft in height. Use pine or aspen shavings in their cage without a wire floor. You can cut a piece of fleece to create a "bib" to tie around the cage bottom to help keep the shavings in because they do fly as they bounce around.

Since chinchillas have thick fur, they are unable to tolerate intense heat, so you must place your pet in an area with a temperature less than 80 (preferably no higher than 70) degrees. One last important fact about chinchillas is their active behavior in the evening and early morning. They tend to be playful during



the evening/night, so the best place to position the cage is somewhere farther from your bedroom. This way, you can sleep peacefully while your chinchillas enjoy playing and jumping around in their cage.

Chins love to get out into a room (that has been chinchilla proofed) to run...they race across the room and then jump as high up the wall as they can, spin around and run the other direction. If you lose your pet look in the secret corner....I've only had one escape. We tracked her to the lower floor of the house then couldn't track her any further. We decided to wait and listen....sure enough in the chair one of us was sitting in a slight rustling. She'd chewed the fabric covering open in the bottom of a recliner and crawled up in the chair after her exhausting adventure.

If you have any questions, please call me 972-571-9823