



Introduction Guide To The Care Of Gerbils

Scientific Name: Gerbillinae

Life Span: 2-3 years on average, though longer is possible

Size: body about 4 inches long, tail another 4 inches.

Appearance: fairly small rodents with long furry tails that have a little tuft of fur at the end. The wild type coloration is "agouti", where each hair is banded with gray, yellowish, and black, with off-white hair on the belly. However, through selective breeding, several lovely color variations are available.

Temperament and Handling: Before you pick your gerbils up, make sure you have clean hands that do not smell like food. Make sure your gerbils are fully awake and aware of your presence. Scoop your gerbils up gently using both hands, a cup or a cardboard tube. NEVER pick your gerbils up by the tail, not even the base of the tail. The tail can break off or the skin can rip, leaving exposed bone. Gerbils are active and curious animals. They love to dig tunnels and chew. Gerbils have poor eyesight but good hearing and a good sense of smell. Gerbils are not nocturnal. They go through several sleep/active cycles throughout the day and night. Gerbils are very social animals and usually do best with the companionship of their own species. It is unnatural for them to live alone. Whenever possible, gerbils should be kept in at least same gender pairs. They enjoy grooming together, eating together, playing together, curling up to sleep together and just being together.

Housing: A glass aquarium tank with wire mesh cover, like critters choice, small animal cage, or tube cage like CritterTrail can all make an excellent home for gerbils. You should have at least a ten gallon tank or cage for a pair of gerbils. Bigger is always better for your pets home, so go with the largest size possible. You will also need, bedding for the bottom of the cage, tunnels and tubes for playing and exploring. Play areas with sloping ramps and a climbing branch. A variety of toys that can be changed periodically, to keep your gerbil entertained, an exercise wheel and Cardboard for chewing. Paper towel and toilet paper rolls work very well. A nesting box and unscented toilet paper for use as nesting material, stoppered water bottle and heavy ceramic bowl for food. Your gerbil should have access to a dust bath filled with Chinchilla/gerbil sand which should be placed in the cage so that the animal can use it as required. If your gerbil over dusts itself, or you find the bath is being used as a toilet then remove the bath and simply put it back into the cage every other day for 20



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Pets and reptiles

minutes or so. Cages and all equipment should be cleaned and disinfected regularly, at least once per week.

Heating and Lighting: (see above)

Feeding: Commercial food mixes usually have all the essential nutrients a gerbil needs. Treats for your gerbil. Fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and grains, or commercial pet treats and a vitamin supplement to ensure your pet has a well balanced diet.

Please note that this is only an introductory guide based on our opinions and experience, we advise you to continually research and learn as much as possible from as many sources as you can, every animal is different and new care and information is always being developed and found 😊