

## Reproduction

Guinea pigs are enthusiastic about reproduction, and if you are not careful, you may find yourself swamped with babies! Guinea Pigs can start breeding at 6-8 weeks of age

If planning breeding, a female Guinea pig should have her first litter before 6 months of age as after this age the pelvic bones become fused and can cause problems during labour, needing assistance or surgery.

Desexing your Guinea Pig is recommended. Males and females can be desexed from 5 months of age. It promotes a calmer temperament and reduces the likelihood of some serious diseases, like polycystic ovarian disease.



## Dental & Nail Care

Dental care for Guinea Pigs is critically important & usually depends on what type of food you feed them. Guinea pigs, like horses, grow their teeth continuously through life. Dental problems can occur due to inaccurate types of feed, genetics or trauma. You should make sure that they are receiving the right types of foods to prevent dental problems.

Guinea pigs should be checked regularly for overgrown claws and teeth. Sometimes overgrown nails or poor coats can be a sign of disease, like arthritis or polycystic ovaries. Your veterinary surgeon can discuss suitable treatment.

Too much scratching results from skin problems and is often caused by lice or mites. Application of parasite treatment such as imidacloprid/moxidectin combinations work well but are not labelled for guinea pigs.

## Heat Stress

Guinea Pigs are not greatly suited to the Australian climate, but Orange is quite forgiving. It is essential that you keep them cool throughout the hot days & warm during the cold winters.

Here are some tips to help you Guinea Pig through summer:

- Keep your Guinea pig inside
- Provide shaded areas / shelter
- A well ventilated area
- Plenty of drinking water
- You can mist them with water
- Place them on cool surfaces e.g. tiles
- Give them Ice bricks to bask on
- Give frozen treats to eat



If your Guinea Pig is looking unwell or not eating for 12 hours it is best to take them to visit the vet.

Pet insurance is worth considering.

**OPENING HOURS AT  
ORANGE VETERINARY HOSPITAL**  
**MONDAY—FRIDAY**  
**8.30AM-5.30PM**  
**SATURDAY:**  
**8.30AM-12PM**  
**EMERGENCY HOURS 24/7 ON: 0263618388**

# Caring For Your Guinea Pig



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## Congratulations!

Your new Guinea Pig will be a lot of fun & will become an important member of your household. With this comes a big responsibility for their health & wellbeing. Good housing, lots of affection & plenty of appropriate play & attention are vital for your guinea pig's progression to a healthy & enjoyable family pet. Here's some basic tips for helping with your Guinea Pigs health.

### Where Do Guinea Pigs Come From?

Guinea pigs are native to South America. The common guinea pig was first domesticated as early as 5000 BC for food by tribes in the Andean region of South America. Today they are found world-wide & make great pocket pets! They are social animals & they thrive on companionship from other Guinea pigs.

### Lifespan

Guinea pigs can live between 4-5 years of age & they can weigh anywhere between 0.7-1.2kg, depending on the breed. It is essential that your Guinea Pigs gets all the necessary care that is needed for their breed, age & sex.

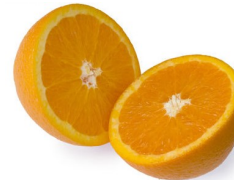
Guinea pigs are social animals and enjoy being in a little herd. We do not recommend housing guinea pigs in the same enclosure as rabbits as they can be stressed and bullied.



## Diet

**Fibre, fibre, fibre** - This is the most **important** food stuff to be offering your pig is fibre, the best source of this is fresh grass, or grass hay (timothy, oaten, wheaten, pasture, meadow, ryegrass or paddock hay). Be sure to check for weeds or mould before feeding to your pig. Avoid Lucerne or clover hay.

Guinea pigs require **one cup of vegetables** a day. This can include; lettuce, capsicum, coriander, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli, brussel sprouts, kale, celery, parsley, green beans, spinach, zucchini, herbs (basil, parsley, mint, dill, coriander) & cucumber. Scraps from your vegetables are appropriate. Fruits can be distributed once or twice per week. This can include; oranges, blueberries & apple. Remember that fruits are high in sugars and if given regularly may contribute to obesity related issues, including arthritis. Always provide vegetables that include a good source of vitamin C.



Like humans guinea pigs cannot manufacture their own ascorbic acid **vitamin C** & require this to be supplemented in their diet. Guinea pigs require 20-30mg of Vitamin C daily to ensure they remain at optimum health. You can use a supplement such as; Vetafarm Furry Friends Vita-C supplement.

Guinea pigs should have constant access to **fresh water**; dripper bottles hung on the side of the cage are better than a bowl to keep clean and avoid mosquitos.

Keep feeding habits & food types consistent. Rapid changes will cause digestive upsets such as diarrhoea or gas.



## Vaccinations

There are no current vaccinations for Guinea Pigs within Australia.

### Worming

Guinea pigs can come into contact with intestinal worms in their environment, so it is vital to keep them up to date with their worming schedule. Guinea pigs can contract worms from cat & dog faeces, so it is essential that if your own a cat or dog that your Guinea Pig does not have access to eating it. Prevention is far better than treatment for worms, so it is best to regularly de-worm them with a treatment such as Revolution, Advocate or Profender.



### Husbandry

Guinea pigs should have daily exercise to reduce the risk of obesity, for mental stimulation & to maintain a healthy digestive tract. Remember they chew, dig & run!

Behavioural enrichment is also important for guinea pigs. Guinea pigs are social species so a buddy is the best enrichment. Make the cage as big as possible, with hiding spots! Cardboard boxes, tree branches, wooden toys, & treat foods can all be used to entertain your guinea pig. They love

