

# Hairless Guinea Pig

*Cavia porcellus*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

Not your average guinea pigs, hairless guinea pigs always create quite a response from anyone who sees them. They communicate by making many different kinds of sounds (squeaks). Hairless guinea pigs come in two varieties: Baldwin and skinny.



### Is a hairless guinea pig the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

1. I have an appropriate location and space for a guinea pig.
2. I know that male and female guinea pigs should not be housed together.
3. I will provide daily, supervised time for this guinea pig outside the habitat.
4. I can commit to providing proper care for this guinea pig.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered, "Yes" to these statements, a hairless guinea pig may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a hairless guinea pig and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** 8 to 11 inches long

**Life Span** Up to 8 years with proper care

**Diet** Constant supply of high-quality guinea pig food; provide timothy hay at all times, fresh vegetables, and fruits

Requires 30–50 mg of vitamin C daily from vitamin supplements, parsley, washed citrus fruits

Treats should not exceed 10% of total food intake

Clean, fresh, filtered, chlorine-free water changed daily

Do not feed chocolate, alcohol or caffeine as these can cause serious medical problems

**Feeding** Food and water should always be available

In order to maintain a constant body temperature, hairless guinea pigs eat more food than those with hair

Fruits and vegetables not eaten within 24 hours should be discarded

**Housing** Hairless guinea pigs should be kept at normal household temperatures, 69°F to 79°F; above 85°F can cause heatstroke; habitat should never be in direct sunlight or drafts

An approximately 30"Lx15"Wx15"H escape-proof habitat with solid flooring and plenty of room for exercise and play makes a good home for a guinea pig; provide the largest habitat possible; provide a place to hide

1–2 inches of bedding should be placed on top; proper bedding includes hardwood shavings or pelleted or recycled paper; cedar-based products may cause harm and are not recommended

Different types of small animals should not be housed together. House adult males separately

### Recommended Supplies

- |   |  |                                       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate size habitat     | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceramic food bowl | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bedding                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle      | <input type="checkbox"/> Nesting box  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High-quality guinea pig food | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamin C         | <input type="checkbox"/> Chew stick   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about guinea pigs       | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys              | <input type="checkbox"/> Salt lick    |

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### Normal Behavior and Interaction

Easy to handle; prefers a routine and similar times for playing, feeding and resting each day  
Hides in objects, but will come out when people are near the habitat  
Chews on objects to maintain incisor teeth, which grow continuously; ensure have plenty of chew sticks available

### Habitat Maintenance

Remove wet spots daily; change bedding weekly or more often, as needed  
Clean the habitat and its contents once a week with mild soap and water, rinse and allow to dry completely before placing the guinea pig back into the habitat

### Grooming and Hygiene

Guinea pigs stay clean and rarely need baths; if skin becomes flaky and dry, wipe with baby wipes containing Aloe or a damp washcloth  
Consult with a veterinarian if a guinea pig's teeth or nails seem too long  
Because all guinea pigs are potential carriers of infectious diseases, always wash your hands before and after handling your guinea pig and/or the habitat contents to help prevent the potential of spread of diseases.  
Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for a guinea pig and should consider not having a guinea pig as a pet. For more information regarding guinea pigs and disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/> and PETCO at <http://www.petco.com/pet care info/companion animal care sheets>.

### Signs of a Healthy Animal

- Active, alert, and sociable
- Soft, smooth skin
- Clear eyes
- Eats and drinks regularly
- Communicates by squeaking
- Walks normally

### Common Health Issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
Diarrhea	Loose stools caused by poor diet, stress, internal parasites, unclean housing, or other illness.	Consult with an exotic animal veterinarian to determine cause and treatment.
Malocclusion	Overgrown teeth.	Consult with an exotic animal veterinarian to possibly have teeth trimmed regularly.
Mites	External parasite that causes irritation to the skin.	Contact an exotic animal veterinarian for treatment.
Ringworm	Skin infection caused by fungi.	Consult with an exotic animal veterinarian for treatment.
Scurvy	A disease caused by vitamin C deficiency that results in poor appetite, sore joints and chest, and bleeding from the gums.	If untreated, will be fatal; consult with an exotic animal veterinarian immediately.

### Red Flags

- Weight loss
- Distressed breathing
- Skin lesions
- Dried crust on front legs
- Lethargic
- Overgrown teeth
- Diarrhea or dirty bottom
- Eye or nasal discharge

If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.

### Sources

*Guinea Pigs in Your Life* by Critter Press  
*The ASPCA Complete Guide to Pet Care* by David L. Carroll

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.