

# Hamster

## Care Sheet



Around the world, hamsters inhabit a variety of environments, including warm, dry areas such as steppes, grasslands, and the edges of deserts. They thrive on a diverse diet that consists of various plants, fruits, vegetables, and nuts/seeds. To ensure that your hamster's life closely resembles its natural habitat, it is essential to consider several factors: providing a suitable environment, maintaining a healthy diet, promoting normal behaviour, and protecting them from harm. Hamsters are cautious yet kind and curious creatures. Some species can live in groups with their family, while others prefer to be solitary. Typically, hamsters are crepuscular animals, meaning they are most active during the twilight hours of dawn and dusk. While they are often thought of as nocturnal, their peak activity occurs during the transition times between day and night.

### Get to know

Getting to know your adorable hamster is a delightful journey that can deepen your bond and make for a happy pet! Understanding their likes and dislikes, as well as recognising signs of stress or illness, is essential to ensure they always feel safe and cherished in your care. Take your time to establish trust. Allow your furry friend to acclimate to their new environment for a few days. You can gradually introduce yourself with tasty treats, which will help them associate you with positive experiences. Remember, hamsters can be sensitive to loud noises and sudden movements, so creating a peaceful, calm space for them is vital. By nurturing this relationship, you'll become their trusted protector, and together you can enjoy many joyful moments ahead!

### Enclosure

Creating a wonderful home for your hamster is all about ensuring their safety and happiness! If you have a spacious Syrian hamster, aim for a cage that's at least 100cm x 50cm; these little explorers will absolutely thrive in a larger environment. Consider adding multiple levels for climbing and discovery, as they love to explore! It's crucial to choose a secure cage with metal bars, so your curious friend won't escape or nibble their way out. Plus, a sturdy base will keep their home intact, avoiding materials like wire mesh that could harm their tiny feet. With the right setup, your hamster's world will be a joyful adventure every day! To keep your hamsters happy and thriving together, it's essential to provide a spacious cage! A larger habitat ensures they have plenty of room to explore and enjoy their own space while still allowing them the opportunity to bond when they choose.

### Exercise

Hamsters are such lively little pets, and they absolutely love to explore their surroundings! To keep them healthy and happy, a spacious wheel for running is a fantastic idea, along with fun toys and tasty treats for them to find. It's also wonderful to let them have some supervised playtime outside their cage. Just make sure to create a safe space free from wires and hidden escape routes, as these little adventurers can be pretty sneaky! Using a hamster ball is an excellent way for them to roam and discover new things while staying secure safely.



LIFESPAN	SIZE	TEMPERATURE	HUMIDITY
2-3 years	2-8 inches Depending on species	Can tolerate temperatures ranging from 18°C to 27°C.	40% - 60%

## Environment

**Substrate:** When it comes to choosing bedding for your hamster, you have many options like shredded paper, aspen, toilet paper, and even soil. Many owners prefer aspen for its excellent qualities. Just remember to provide a nice, thick layer, as hamsters adore burrowing! Avoid wood shavings, sawdust, cotton balls, and any scented bedding, as they can be harmful to your furry friend.

**Décor:** Decorating your hamster's enclosure is so important! It encourages exercise and taps into their natural instincts. Be sure to include plenty of cozy hides where they can snuggle up when they need some quiet time. And don't forget the toys! They're not just fun; they also help keep your hamster's teeth healthy.

**Cleaning:** It is essential to keep your enclosure clean. Promptly spot clean your enclosure whenever you notice waste. Additionally, all substrates must be replaced at least once a week, and the enclosure must be thoroughly cleaned using a safe disinfectant.

## Diet

**Feeding:** A hamster's diet is vital for its overall health and vitality! To help your furry friend thrive, offer a high-quality, balanced diet. You can choose from specially formulated commercial hamster foods, designed to deliver all the essential nutrients, or create your delightful mix of seeds, grains, nuts, and freshly washed fruits and veggies! Make mealtime fun by providing a bowl for food while also scattering it around the cage, allowing your hamster to enjoy a little treasure hunt.

**Water:** It's essential to keep your hamster happy and healthy by providing them with fresh water every day! A water bottle is a great option, as it prevents them from getting bedding in their water. Just remember to choose a bottle that's the right size for your furry friend, making it easy for them to drink.

### Hamster's weight

Monitoring your hamster's weight is crucial for their overall health and happiness! An overweight hamster may exhibit signs such as a rounded belly, difficulty moving, and a noticeable fat fold around the waist. You should be able to gently feel their spine and ribs—if not, it could signal obesity. On the other hand, if you're concerned your hamster might be underweight, simply look and feel for their ribs and hip bones. If you can easily detect them without much pressure, it might be time to adjust their diet. Caring for your furry friend in this way will ensure they stay fit and lively!





## Health & Welfare

An energetic and vibrant hamster is a joy to have! Signs of good health include a shiny coat, clear eyes, and an active demeanour. Watch for a smooth gait, a clean rear, and no signs of injury, such as lumps or breathing issues. Healthy hamsters also boast evenly trimmed teeth and a hearty appetite, showcasing their thriving spirit!



## Hamster

## Hibernation

It's fascinating to learn that some hamster species hibernate! To keep your little friend safe, it's important to provide a warm environment, especially during the chilly winter months. Syrian hamsters, for instance, are often misidentified as having passed away when they enter a state of hibernation. To determine if your hamster is just hibernating, observe their breathing—if it's slow and shallow, try to encourage a little movement. A great way to check is by placing a spoon near their nose to see if it fogs up from their breath. Gently stroking them can also help you assess their wellbeing; look for any little twitches. If you're feeling concerned, simply warming the room can coax them back to activity, and before you know it, your furry friend will be wide awake and full of energy!

## Transport

When taking your animals with you, ensure their travel box is safe for them. Ensure there is enough room for your tortoise to sit comfortably, but not so much that they can be knocked around. If they are new to travel, then even putting a cloth over them to create darkness can help calm them. Ensure it's well-ventilated, but also ensure there's no escape. Heat is vital when it is very cold outside; bring a battery-powered heat pack or a hot water bottle to help provide warmth, so you stay comfortable.

## Diseases and Concerns

Hamsters may be small, but they're powerful little creatures with fantastic survival instincts! Like all pets, they have some health concerns to watch for. One of the most common issues is wet tail—a severe form of diarrhoea that can be caused by stress, bacterial infections, or sudden diet changes. Young hamsters are particularly vulnerable, so quick action is key if you notice symptoms. Respiratory infections can also affect breathing and are often accompanied by symptoms such as sneezing and coughing. Another critical aspect to consider is dental health. Since a hamster's teeth grow continuously, providing lots of chewable items is a great way to help keep them in tip-top shape. If you see any misalignment, don't hesitate to consult your vet; they're happy to help!

If you're considering getting a corn snake, it's vital to research potential health issues. Make it a habit to check your snake's health every day, and reach out to a reptile veterinarian right away if you notice anything unusual.