

PISCES

PET EMPORIUM



Photo by Pisces Pet Emporium

Chinchilla

Chinchilla lanigera

Lifespan: 10 to 15 years.

Size: 1 to 1.5 pounds.

Maturity / Breeding: Sexual maturity occurs at around 5 to 8 months of age. The gestation period is 105 to 115 days and litters typically contain 1 to 5 kits. The babies are weaned at 6 to 8 weeks of age. Chinchilla females come into heat about every 30 days but typically only breed during spring and fall months.

Enclosure: A wire cage measuring around 36" x 20" x 36" is suitable for one Chinchilla. Provide levels and tubes for your Chinchilla to play and exercise on. Chinchillas also love wheels and will run on it all the time. Use of Pine or Cedar shavings should be avoided.

Heating: Chinchillas are sensitive to higher temperatures, which can lead to heat stroke, and drafts, which can lead to pneumonia. An ambient temperature of 18 °C to 27 °C is recommended. Avoid putting your Chinchilla's cage in direct sunlight or drafty areas of your house. If the room is too warm, you can put a cool slab of marble or granite in the cage for your Chinchilla to lay on.

Feeding: Young Chinchillas should be free fed a Chinchilla pellet and alfalfa hay until they are 6 months old. After 6 months, your Chinchilla will eat fewer pellets (1-2 rounded tablespoons per day) and unlimited amounts of Timothy hay. ***Pisces recommends: Oxbow Essentials Chinchilla Food.***

Vitamins, Supplements & Treats: A Chinchilla's pellet and hay diet can be supplemented with treats such as rolled oats, seed and nut mixtures, and small amounts of vegetables and fruits. A varied diet like this usually means your Chinchilla will not need vitamins. However, they are prone to calcium deficiencies and a calcium supplement may be required. Sprinkling a small amount of calcium powder on their pellet diet daily will suffice.

Handling: Chinchillas primarily use their sense of smell to recognize their owners. Never grab your Chinchilla quickly; this kind of stress causes "fur slip" or "slippage" which means it will drop a large amount of fur. The best way to hold your Chinchilla is at the base of their tail with one hand and supporting all of the body weight underneath the body with your other hand. Remember, Chinchillas are not the cuddlers that other small animals can be, so it is possible to handle them too much.

Health Care: Chinchillas can be prone to intestinal problems, calcium deficiency, ringworm and pneumonia. All of these can be prevented with proper care. A Chinchilla's incisor teeth are constantly growing so wooden chews are essential to prevent their teeth from growing to unnatural lengths. If your Chinchilla's teeth do reach this state, your Chinchilla may have difficulty eating and this must be addressed by a veterinarian.

Grooming: Chinchillas should never be bathed with water, as this causes problems like fur rot or skin fungus. Your Chinchilla should get a dust bath daily, in which they can roll to absorb oils in their coats.

Pisces recommends: *Living World Bath Sand.*

Exercise/Toys: Your Chinchilla should be given time outside of the cage to run around and explore safely. Make sure to pick up wires or cords and ensure there are no places to fall from or get stuck in. Give them plenty of things to climb, chew and swing on in their cage and play area. Wooden platforms, tubes stuffed with hay, twig balls and Chinchilla swings are all great items for your Chinchilla. **Pisces recommends: *Super Pet Lava Ledge and Living World Chew-Nels.***

Safe Handling of Small Animals*: As with all living creatures, small animals can carry microorganisms which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

Recommended Books: This care sheet is designed to provide you with some basic information on your new pet. To learn more about how to care for your pet, Pisces recommends: *Chinchillas*, by Barron's Books.

Recommended Supplies:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Large multi-level cage ❑ Aspen shavings or Carefresh ❑ Ceramic food dish ❑ Water bottle ❑ Oxbow Essentials Chinchilla Food ❑ Corner litter box | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Litter (Pisces recommends Yesterdays News for cats) ❑ Hay rack ❑ Bath Sand ❑ Bath house ❑ Chew blocks |
|---|---|

Your New Pet: It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness.

Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat.

A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.



4921 Skyline Way N.E.

Calgary, Alberta T2E 4G5

Phone: (403) 274-3314 Fax: (403) 275-6296

www.piscespets.com

Email: pisces@piscespets.com

Reprint of this handout only with permission of and full credit to Pisces Pet Emporium

**Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*