

## GENERAL NOTES

- Hamsters like to be alone.
- Are most active at night.
- Life expectancy of about 1-3 years.
- Nails grow continuously, walking on wood helps wear them down.
- Teeth grow continuously, chew toys must be provided to avoid problems. Mineral stones are also good plus provide extra vitamins and minerals to the diet.
- Hamsters are very sensitive to high pitched sounds.

## CAGE

- Quiet location with little traffic.
- Not near tvs, radios, etc.
- Not in direct sunlight.
- Temperature between 20-25°C (if it gets too hot you may place a damp cloth over the cage to cool it off).
- Minimum cage size is 22 x 12 inches and 12 inches high. The bigger the better.
- Wire spacing should be no more the ½ inch apart; galvanized steel is the best option.
- Bottom tray should be about 4 inches deep to keep the bedding from falling out.
- Hamster safe bedding: aspen, carefresh, critter country, yesterday's news
  - Do not use cedar or pine
- Bedding should be 1-2 inches deep.
- Hamsters can be toilet trained by putting soiled bedding into the toilet, they will naturally tend to go there.

- Houses are important for hamsters to retreat to if threatened and they will also hoard food there. They should be about 4 x 8 inches.
- Provide hamster fluff for nesting material.
- Provide a small dish for food and a water bottle.
- Hamster wheels are important for the health of the hamster, just make sure they are the right size so that no injuries occur. Ten inch diameter, closed on one side is preferred.
- A system of tubes is good for the hamster's natural urge to explore.

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## ACCLIMATION

- Leave the hamster alone for the first week, just change food and water.
- Never pick up the hamster unexpectedly or make quick movements or it will get scared.
- Don't use any perfumed soaps and rub your hand with some bedding.
- Offer the hamster some food.
- Once it is comfortable accepting food you can gently pet it and hold your hand a little higher up to try and encourage it to climb up.
- To pick up the hamster use a cup shape with both your hands but be careful it doesn't jump out.

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## FREE EXERCISE TIME

- Indoors only, supervised.
- Clear of any dangers; poisonous houseplants, any electrical wires, safe from other pets.

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## DIET

- Hamster pellets, 1-2 teaspoons of food per day.
- Fresh foods can be slowly introduced in small amounts after at least 1 month after the purchase. Carrots (not the tops), apples, and cucumbers are the best.
- Small amounts of pear, lettuce, strawberries are also good.

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- Feed fresh foods in only small amounts daily and remove any from the previous day.
- Hamsters require a small amount of animal protein. Very small amounts of cottage cheese, hamburger, or canned dog food. Live foods such as mealworms or crickets can be fed for protein, about 1-2 per week.

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## CLEANING

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### DAILY CHECKS

- Make sure food and water are full
- Remove any fresh food from the previous day, but leave any dry food that has been hoarded.

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### WEEKLY

- Place the hamster with some of the bedding from the cage into a separate container.
- Clean food dish and water bottle with hot water (animal safe detergent if necessary).
- Remove all bedding and hoarded food.
- Clean the cage bars, bottom tray, and accessories with hot water and a pet safe detergent (very mild mix).
- Once everything is dry replace it to where it was, you can use some of the old clean bedding so the hamster has a familiar scent.