

Hamsters

FACTSHEET

All animals need the following five things to be happy and healthy: a comfortable home, suitable diet, companionship, normal behaviour and vet care.

Find out how you can care for hamsters by using the information below.



HOME

Animals need a comfortable home with enough space to exercise.



Although hamsters are very small they have bags of energy and a small house just won't do. The ideal size for a hamster is at least 80cm wide by 50cm deep by 35cm high with different levels for them to climb to and explore.



DIET

Animals need a healthy diet and access to fresh water at all times.

Hamsters should be fed a good quality dry mix hamster food and they will enjoy finding their food scattered around their home and their toys, rather than having it in a food bowl waiting for them.

They also enjoy pasta (cooked or raw), broccoli, strawberries and grapes and even dried herbs as tasty treats.



COMPANIONSHIP

Some animals need friends of their own kind, some would rather live by themselves.

Hamsters are naturally solitary creatures which means they prefer to live on their own. They can fight, even to the death, if not separated.



WOOD GREEN
The Animals Charity



NORMAL BEHAVIOUR

Animals need exciting things to do and space to behave normally.



- ♥ Although hamsters are known for sleeping a lot during the day, when they are awake they are often very busy exploring, foraging for food and digging. If they are chewing the bars of their cage, that is a sure sign they are bored and need more exciting things to do.
- ♥ Try giving them old plastic children's toys such as a doll's house or old garage to explore, shallow tubs of chinchilla sand for them to dig in and cardboard boxes and tubes.



VET CARE

Animals need to be kept healthy and see the vet if they are sick or injured.

Hamsters are generally quite healthy pets so just watch out for changes in the way they behave and take them to the vet if you are worried.

If hamsters are kept on sawdust they can suffer from **parasities** – tiny creatures who crawl into their fur and make them itchy and sore so try using shredded paper instead.

Watch out for something called **wet tail** too – if you spot runny poo, a very strong smell or that they've stopped eating or suddenly got thinner take them to your vet straight away.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your hamster's teeth never stop growing?

It is important to give them things like apple or pear twigs to gnaw on to keep their teeth nice and healthy. Fatty and colourful chew sticks can be very unhealthy so it's best to stick to healthy, natural treats that your hamster can gnaw on.