

Guinea pig

Cavia porcellus

🇫🇷 Cochon d'Inde 🇩🇪 Meerschweinchen



REGULATIONS

Companion animal

OPAn: mandatory group housing (min. 2), minimum space and shelters. Professional trade: competence certificate. Transport per FSV0 rules.



LIFESPAN

5–8 years



ADULT WEIGHT

800–1000 g



LIFESTYLE

Diurnal



BODY TEMPERATURE

37.2–39.5 °C



SEXUAL MATURITY

42–70 days



GESTATION

68–68 days



LITTER / CLUTCH SIZE

2–4



Habitat & environment

Type — Semi-free range, enclosure or large cage with regular out-of-cage time, sheltered from drafts

Substrate — Towels, DryBed®/VetBed®, Toftbo® mats, yoga mat or blanket. Plant-based bedding: Nulldodor® (fir wood), hemp, recycled paper. Avoid cedar and pine.

Exercise — At least two hours per day indoors or in an outdoor enclosure (temperature permitting) to stimulate gut transit and prevent obesity



Equipment

- Hideout (small house, cardboard box, tunnel)
- Hay rack
- Heavy food bowl
- Heavy water bowl (refresh daily). Low-lime/calcium water: risk of urinary stones.



Technical parameters



Ambient

18–24 °C



Behaviour

Very shy and easily stressed animal.

Social life — Social animal that needs conspecifics to live peacefully. Watch for male-male grouping (fighting). Do not house with rabbits (Bordetella transmission risk).

Activity cycle — Diurnal



Enrichment

- Tunnels
- Safe exploration
- Daily out-of-cage time



Nutrition

Strict herbivore. Hay/grass ad libitum (twice the animal's body volume per day). Ensures dental wear and good digestibility.

Daily base



Hay

Timothy, Crau, mountain or cereal hay.
Brands: Oxbow Timothy, Supreme Science



Grass

Fresh



Vegetables & greens

100 g/kg/day, at least 3 different kinds per day. Favour vitamin-C-rich vegetables and leafy greens. Warning: Tomato, spinach and vitamin-C-rich fruits should be given in moderation (small quantities), as they are high in calcium and sugar.



Broccoli

Feuilles



Vit C



Beet Greens



Vit C



Spinach

Modération (riche en Ca)



Vit C

 Carrot Greens
 Radish Greens
 Artichoke
Feuilles
 Cat Grass
 Basil
 Swiss Chard

 Dandelion
 Clover
 Plantain
 Hazelnut Leaves
 Burnet
 Hogweed

 Celery
Feuille et branche
 Celery Root
 Chervil
 Curly Endive
 Endive

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Pellets & supplements

Recommended brands : Oxbow · Supreme Science Selective · Beaphar · Versele Laga

Pellets (uniform shape only — never seed mixes / muesli) should be given in small quantity: maximum 20 g/kg of body weight per day. Not essential; in excess they favour dental malocclusion, overweight and digestive problems: prioritise hay and greens.

Pellets

★ Treats (occasional)

Not essential, rich in carbohydrates and sugars. Considered as treats. Can be given as enrichment, in small quantities, 1 to 2 times per week.

 Carrot
 Red bell pepper  Riche en Vitamine C
 Turnip

 Orange  Riche en Vitamine C
 Strawberry
 Apple

 Pear
 Tomato
Modération (riche en Ca/sucre)

Vitamin C

The guinea pig cannot synthesise vitamin C (like humans). To prevent scurvy — the consequence of a deficiency — vitamin C must be given orally every day. Beware: it degrades quickly in drinking water! During growth, pregnancy or illness, requirements double.

TO AVOID

 Soy
 Avocado
 White Cabbage
 Onion
 Garlic
 Sorrel

 Potato
 Tomato Leaves
 Leek
 Rhubarb
 Peels
 Bread

 Sweets
 Chocolate
 Cereal Bars
 Dried Fruits

Health & prevention

Preventive medicine

Deworming required if allowed outdoors or symptomatic. Annual check-up recommended.

Vaccination

None

Surgery & neutering

Castration (male, 4 months) / ovariectomy (female, 5 months). Prevents ovarian cysts.

Common conditions

Scurvy

SYMPTOMS Lameness, lethargy, loss of appetite, bleeding

CAUSE Vitamin C deficiency

PREVENTION Daily oral supplementation

WARNING SIGNS

- Gut stasis
- Loss of appetite
- Breathing difficulties
- Lethargy

If any of these symptoms appear, prompt veterinary care is essential. Contact an exotic-pet vet as soon as possible.

Ovarian cysts

SYMPTOMS Very common in unsprayed females

PREVENTION Ovariectomy recommended at 5 months

Pubic symphysis fusion

SYMPTOMS High risk during late first parturition

CAUSE First breeding after 8 months of age

PREVENTION Breed between 5 and 8 months of age

Pododermatitis

SYMPTOMS Inflammation under the paws

CAUSE Unsuitable substrate, humidity, dust

PREVENTION Soft substrate (DryBed), hygiene, exercise



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