



The Chinchilla Club

~International Organization for Education of Chinchillas as Pets

Dear Pet Store Owner,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our club and tell you about a new program promoting chinchillas as pets. We would like to work with you to provide your customers with information on what a wonderful pet a chinchilla can be as well as provide a source for answering all of their care questions after their purchase.

We are an International Organization that focuses on educating the public about what a chinchilla is and it's special care needs. Our organization has a website at www.ChinchillaClub.com, which offers our members a wealth of information on all aspects of chinchilla care. We also have a bi-monthly web based magazine and many message boards for immediate help.

We have recently started an Outreach Program for pet stores to introduce ourselves and see if we can be of any service to you. You should find along with this page an advertisement sheet, which some stores like to place near the chinchilla cage, telling their customers a little about chinchillas and why they make good pets. Along with that there should be a care sheet that covers all of the basic areas of chinchilla care, especially those areas that are unlike other rodent pets. You are welcome to make copies of the care sheet and hand them out to customers or anyone else who might find it useful.

If you would like more information about our club please visit us at www.chinchillaclub.com or contact me at info@chinclub.net. We do offer affiliate programs where you can join our club for a onetime membership fee of \$25. This membership will allow you to give away certificates for a free Chinchilla Club membership to each individual who buys a chinchilla from you. You will also be able to print multi-page care booklets right from our website to give out as well. These will give your customer a wonderful source for answering any questions they may have throughout the life of their chinchilla. You will also have access to our site with all of its information on everything from birth to health problems.

We hope that you find this information useful and if you would like more information on how to take advantage of this program please do not hesitate to contact us. Our club is founded by breeders with many years of experience and a true love for the chinchillas. If we can be of any help to you just let us know. I look forward to hearing from you

**Jamie Huggins
The Chinchilla Club
843-562-2240
Chinchilla_Club@yahoo.com
<http://www.ChinchillaClub.com>**



Chinchillas

Chinchillas are a type of rodent from the Andes Mountains in South America. They are known for their extremely soft and thick fur. They are nocturnal but most chinchillas are willing to wake up any part of the day to play. Unlike most rodents they live an average of 10-20 years. They have many unique qualities that make them wonderful pets for adults and older children.

Chinchillas make wonderful pets:

- *Chinchillas are hypoallergenic. People who are allergic to pet dander can usually own a chinchilla with no problems.**
- *Chinchilla urine doesn't smell. A chinchilla kept in a wire cage indoors will only need to be changed once a week and you should not notice the ammonia smell associated with other small pets.**
- *Chinchillas have a life span of 10-20 years.**
- *Chinchillas are social animals and enjoy human companionship once they get used to their new home.**
- *Their dense fur will not allow them to get ticks and fleas.**
- *They do not require water baths or immunizations**

Chinchillas are easy to care for:

- *They require a wire cage with shelves kept indoors. Ferret cages are perfect.**
- *Pine shavings changed once a week**
- *Dust bath a few times a week**
- *Fresh hay, feed, and water daily**
- *Some attention everyday**

Chinchilla Care Sheet

Housing:

Choosing the correct type of home for your pet is a very important decision you have to make. Bearing in mind, a Chinchilla can live to a grand old age, it is important that he has a home where he feels happy and is safe and comfortable. House your chinchilla in a wire cage inside your home. Chinchillas love to jump and climb so be sure to choose that cage that offers shelves. Ferret cages are an ideal choice. Chinchillas are native to a cool climate and have very dense fur to protect them from the cold. This same fur will cause them to overheat in a matter of minutes. Aquariums do not offer enough ventilation and can cause overheating even if it is kept in a cool room. Chinchillas need to be kept at temperatures below 75 degrees. They are nocturnal meaning they will be most active at night. If you are a light sleeper you may choose not to place the cage in your bedroom.

Accessories:

Your chinchilla cage will need a water bottle and a food dish that can be attached to the side of the cage. If you use a food bowl on the floor your chinchilla will sit in it and use it as a potty. Glass water bottles are the best choice since chinchillas do chew. If you can not find a glass bottle look for a metal bottle guard that fits between the cage and the bottle.

You can use pine shavings or a pellet made out of recycled paper to line the bottom of the chinchilla cage. Never use cedar wood of any kind in a chinchilla cage. It will cause respiratory problems. Chinchillas have teeth that are constantly growing so you must provide something in the cage for chewing. We recommend wood toys. Parrot toys made from hanging wood are great and lots of fun for your chinchilla. You can also use Scoria Stones or lava stones made for small animals. Your chinchilla will enjoy chewing on empty toilet paper tubes. This is a fun toy but will not be adequate for keeping his teeth healthy.

Your new chinchilla will need a dust bath a few times a week. You can give it one daily if you like. Take a container that is large enough for your chinchilla to roll around in and fill it with about an inch of Chinchilla Dust. (This is a commercial product usually made of fullers earth. Do Not use regular sand). Place it in the cage for 15-20 minutes and let your chinchilla roll around in it. This removes all of his excess oils and keeps his fur looking thick and beautiful.

Chinchillas do most of their sleeping during the day and prefer to have a house of some sort to sleep in. This can be a box made out of pine or cardboard. You can also use a piece of clay pipe for your animal to sit in and on, which will also allow him to stay cool in the warmer weather. PVC is also acceptable. Never use plastic in a chinchilla cage. Your chinchilla will most likely eat it and this can cause serious health problems.

Food:

Chinchillas have a very delicate digestive system and can not handle a sudden change in food. Diet changes should be added gradually over a week's time to give the digestive system time to adjust. Your Chinchilla will be happy and will stay healthy if he is fed correctly. He should have access to pellets at all times. Make sure that the pellets are fresh and that you keep them in an airtight container to maintain freshness.

He should be fed twice a day, usually morning and early evening are the best. As part of his daily diet he also requires hay every day or every other day. This should be a handful of fresh, green hay. Hay and pellets make up the main source of feed, packed full of vitamins and nutrients, necessary for your pet's health, along with access to fresh drinking water at all times. Chinchillas should not be given watery foods such as lettuce. This can cause serious diarrhea, which can be fatal.

You can also allow your Chinchilla treats, but remember that they are 'treats' and should not be given in excess. You can purchase various natural healthy treats for your Chinchilla. Some are in the form of dried grasses, often with Alfalfa, dried berries, fruit etc. Be careful if buying animal mixes that contain nuts and sunflower seeds. Your pet will readily eat and enjoy them, but caution must be exercised that he does not over indulge on treats that have a high fat content. Also, you can give raisins, which are the number one treat as far as Chinchillas are concerned. Two or three raisins a day will make for a happy Chinchilla. A slice of apple, or dried fruit is also enjoyed. Cereals that have no sugar content and are natural, such as muesli and cornflakes also help add variety and fiber to your pet's diet. You could perhaps make up a rotation, allowing him one different treat every day. That way he will never know what is coming and will look forward to a nice treat each day. After all, your Chinchilla is a pet and it is obvious that you will want to spoil him. A nice sized cage with plenty to keep him busy, a sand bath, complimented with good feed and a treat once a day, will make for a happy, healthy pet.

Play Time:

Chinchillas are very social and need to interact with you every day. They can be shy around new people and will need some time to adjust to a new home. The first day of your chinchilla's arrival leave it alone to get used to it's new home. On the second day talk to it softly and place your arm inside the cage. Don't try to hold your new pet or take it out of the cage until it has begun to trust you. Use treats to get it to come up to your hand. It may take a few days but with patience your chinchilla will soon be meeting you at the cage door. Once he has learned to trust you it's OK to take him out of the cage to play. Remember that your chinchilla will chew on anything so keep him away from electrical wires, plastics, and your favorite furniture. If you play with your chinchilla in the bathroom be sure to close the toilet. He can easily jump that high and many chinchillas have gotten a surprise swim that way!