



Planet Guinea Feeding and Nutrition Tips.

Domesticated Guineas are fed a comparably rich diet to their wild ancestors. Their digestive system and dentition was made to cope with a high fibre diet that meant hard work for their constantly growing teeth.

1. Guinea pigs are grazing animals and must feed constantly to keep their gut active and constantly growing teeth worn down. Failure to provide food for a period of just a few hours can lead to a painful death.
 - Ensure food is always available by keeping hay racks and holders full so that guinea pigs can graze at their liberty.
 - Provide variety to the diet by giving a selection of hays and mixing in some of guineas favourite dried herbs with them. Herbs and hays taste tested and approved by guinea pigs are available from Planet Guinea.
 - Your local farm shop can supply you with meadow hay at a reasonable price providing you can store it. See Yellow Pages under 'Farm Shops' for details of your local ones. Good hay should smell fresh– not musty/dusty and be green or golden in colour.
2. Guinea pigs are unable to produce Vitamin C and need a fresh supply every day. This is obtained from fresh grass/herbage or vegetables. Guinea pigs should have at least two meals of fresh vegetables daily.
 - The best fresh food you can feed guinea is clean grass (not clippings from the lawn mower). It promotes the correct chewing action for the teeth.
 - Cauliflower outer leaves, Spring Greens, Kale (twice weekly), Chicory, Celery, Sweetcorn (dwarf and standard, outer leaves and silks), and Broccoli can all be fed to guinea pigs.
 - Carrots, Apples (small amounts), Beetroot (raw, small amount), Parsnip, Parsley (small amounts), Dill, and Coriander can also be given.
 - Take care to feed wild plants in a 'balanced' meal. For example, Dandelion is a diuretic and should be fed alongside Plantain– an astringent. Failure to do so can lead to soft droppings and other problems.
3. There are many guinea pig foods on the market– it is a buyer's market, but can be a buyer's headache!
 - Select a food that does not contain any colourings– even EEC permitted ones. They give false readings should guinea need to have a urine sample taken. One organization found that guinea pigs fed on a brand of food with colourings appeared to suffer more from an irritable urinary tract and when moved off the colourings things seemed to improve. Read the label before buying your guinea pig food.
 - Most UK guinea pig foods contain Alfalfa which is not ideal for adult guinea pigs, SPH Supplies (www.sphsupplies.co.uk) import Cavy Cuisine that is based on Timothy grass and is far better, also preventing selective feeding.
 - Cavy Cuisine is also ideal for guinea pigs with dental problems or Osteodystrophy that have trouble picking up the larger pieces of mix and pellets.
4. Remove uneaten fresh food after every meal. Stale food can potentially heat up and cause bloat/gas which is extremely painful for guinea pigs and could possibly be fatal. Provide Hay/Readigrass to nibble on over night.
5. Grass provides the nutrients and fibre that a guinea pig needs. It promotes the correct action for grinding down those constantly growing teeth. It is not difficult or time consuming to grow your own grass. Grass is the healthy option to feeding vegetables and is the most preferable as far as guinea pigs are concerned. Planet Guinea stocks Cereal grasses that can be grown inside or out and other grasses that have been Selected specifically for their nutritional content or other features that will benefit guinea pigs, e.g. for tunneling.

