



Is your guinea gorgeous?



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Weighty Issues

Do you know how much each of your guineas weighs? Would you notice if they had lost a few ounces in weight?

Guinea pigs are extremely good at hiding illness, so weightloss is often one of the first signs to look out for. By the time people notice that their guinea is getting thinner, it has often lost a LOT of weight. Whilst 85 or 100gms (3 or 4 ounces) might not seem much of a weight loss to a human, to a 900gm (2lb) guinea, that is a large percentage of their body weight to lose. Guineaes fighting infections or not eating properly often lose weight very quickly and can go downhill rapidly over a few short days if the problem is not caught early.

Guinea pig weights vary enormously, but adult guinea usually range from around 900gms (2lbs) to 1500gms (3lbs 5oz), sometimes more. As with humans, weight should be in proportion with the guinea's size and build. At Gorgeous Guineaes we have piggies at both ends of the weight range:)



Here is Gorgeous Gucci demonstrating the "BIG weigh-in" when he almost topped 1600gms (3lbs 9oz). Many different types of scales are available - these were from Argos and show pounds / ounces and grams / kilograms. Always place the scales on a flat surface and make sure your guinea is safe and can't fall or jump off.....pigs don't fly!

Here is a useful site for weight conversion:
[Right On Scales](#)

Weighing your guinea pig regularly can help you to spot any large changes in weight. A guinea's weight often fluctuates by an ounce or two depending on what time of the day you weigh them, and also what season it is. The most important thing is to know what is "normal" for each guinea. Weight loss of 85gms (3oz) or more should put you on alert. Once a guinea starts losing weight, the most important thing is to get them to a vet quickly for a diagnosis of what the problem is. Common causes of weight loss include:

- pain - guinea pigs in pain don't do well and often stop eating. Pain comes in many different forms including lip sores, mouth ulcers, oral fungal infections, post-operative pain, cystitis, bladder stones, major skin problems, sore joints etc. Take the pain away and they will often start eating again. This is why pre and post-operative pain relief is particularly important for guinea pigs.
- infection - weight loss often occurs when a guinea is fighting an infection.
- diarrhoea - dehydration often adds to weight loss if a guinea is not given enough fluids.
- teeth / mouth problems - guinea pigs have difficulty picking up and eating food when their teeth are overgrown, or they have mouth ulcers, or a fungal mouth infection.

Opinions vary as to how often guinea pigs should be weighed. Here at Gorgeous Guineaes, each guinea is weighed on arrival and then every month or so when they are shampooed. Sick guinea pigs are weighed every day at the same time to monitor progress. Once a guinea starts to lose weight, the more it loses, the harder it is to get it back on again. If a guinea stops eating on its own for more than a few hours, it needs to be syringe fed.