



Gerbils

Did you know ... gerbils have hairy tails!

Unlike hamsters, gerbils are quite sociable animals so they shouldn't be kept on their own. Instead they should be kept in groups or same sex pairs.

Gerbils are mainly **nocturnal** which means they spend most of their time sleeping during the day and are awake keeping busy at night.

Most gerbils will live for an average of three to five years.

Gerbil Housing

Your gerbil will need a safe and secure cage that it can't escape from. Plastic cages are the best ones to purchase as your gerbil can't gnaw its way out. They're also much easier to keep clean and hygienic – you should clean your gerbil's cage out at least on a weekly basis.

You'll need to put plenty of bedding, which absorbs moisture, in your gerbil's cage to keep him or her nice and comfy and clean.

Your gerbil will also need a water bottle to drink from and a little bowl to put their food in, along with any toys you choose for them to keep them busy, interested and active.

Holding and stroking your gerbil

When you first bring your gerbil home he or she might be a bit scared and/or timid of you because you're so big compared to them! So it's important to give your new pet time to settle in and get used to you. Once they are used to it, most gerbils like to be handled on a daily basis and become quite friendly.

You can encourage your gerbil to walk into your slightly cupped hands and that's the best way to pick them up to give them a nice gentle stroke. You shouldn't pick your gerbil up by their tails as this hurts them. Also try not to move your hands too quickly so you don't frighten your gerbil. A frightened gerbil may jump out of your hands very quickly and hurt them self when they land.

What should you feed your gerbil?

You can buy special gerbil food from Hillside Vets or other good quality pet shops.

They will also like small pieces of fruit and vegetables but be careful not to give them too much at a time because gerbils tend to hoard (store) extra food which can then rot and be bad for them.

Always ensure your gerbil has fresh clean water in their water bottle daily.

If you are considering a gerbil, or already have one and would like further information about caring for them, then please call the surgery to make an appointment with one of our nurses.

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